Commentary

July–August 2005

The Neoconservative Convergence

Charles Krauthammer

Columbia and the Academic Intifada

Efraim Karsh

Class Struggle in America?

Bruce Bartlett

Europe's "No"

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How to Think About the Crusades

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What Happened to the Movies?

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Eichmann: The Simplicity of Evil

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Romantics' Return

Terry Teachout

Books in Review

James Q. Wilson • Ken I. Kersch • Sam Schulman • Andrew Apostolou
Daniel Casse • Kay S. Hymowitz • Jonathan Kay

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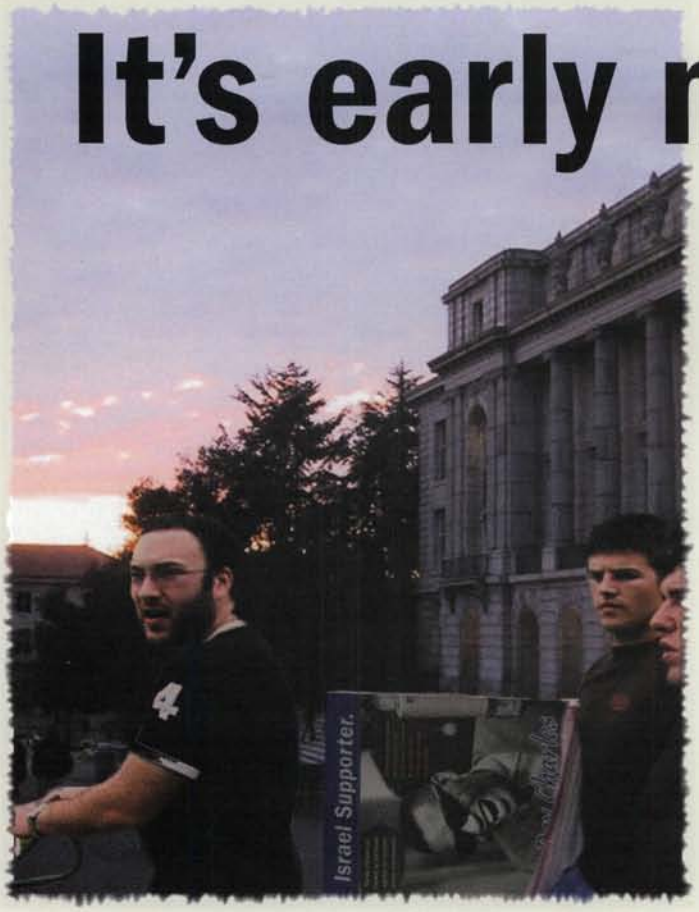

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Commentary

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Commentary
July–August 2005

Letters from Readers

Disengagement

To the Editor:

Norman Podhoretz supports Ariel Sharon's "disengagement" plan, but the whole concept of being able to separate Israelis and Palestinians is false ["Bush, Sharon, My Daughter, and Me," April]. Even if Gaza is completely emptied of any Jewish presence, there will continue to be thousands of Palestinians flooding into Israel daily for work. In addition, Israel will still be providing the Palestinians' basic utilities and depending on the Palestinian authorities to prevent the bombing of its population centers.

As even a cursory look at the daily news reveals, weapons of all sorts have been smuggled into Gaza under the noses of the unconcerned Egyptians, and terrorists have been invited to join the Palestinian Authority. Mr. Podhoretz concedes that the "new" Palestinian leadership's beliefs about terrorism are no different from those espoused by Yasir Arafat. There is no evidence that the Palestinians now acknowledge the Jewish state's right to exist; they do not even pretend to. Why should Israel rush ahead with a plan that uproots 8,000 Jews from their homes and businesses, especially when the plan has such uncertain benefits and when nothing has changed on the ground?

If, after this terrible experiment, terrorism actually increases, Israel will not be able to do anything about it, since the Israel Defense Forces will have been removed from the "hot" areas. Mr. Podhoretz argues that, in such a case, the Palestinians would suffer because they will lose American support for their state. But what if they are not as interested in a state of their own as they are in destroying the Jewish presence here? This is not a risk we Israelis can afford to take.

Mr. Podhoretz puts his faith in George W. Bush and the Bush Doctrine. But there is no evidence that, as he writes, "the Palestinians are now as subject as all the other regimes" to this "great new force." Where exactly does Mr. Podhoretz see the Palestinians being held to some high standard? Where is the evidence of an end to Arab rejectionism or a Palestinian willingness to accept a two-state solution?

Even if the Bush Doctrine were the most perfect idea, the Bush administration is still saddled with a State Department notorious for taking the Arab side, a Congress that includes members from across the political spectrum, and an international community that is usually hostile to Israel. Mr. Podhoretz simply gives too much credit to the ability of one man, who is after all working within a democratic system, to push through his own agenda.

Deborah Buckman
Beit Shemesh, Israel

To the Editor:

Norman Podhoretz's article certainly goes to the heart of the matter concerning the Gaza disengagement. I found his feelings very close to my own and (I would venture to say) those of many other Israelis who have held their breath and allowed Ariel Sharon the leeway he required to proceed. But recent developments have caused me to become a skeptic.

At the end of March, the American ambassador to Israel, Daniel Kurtzer, stated emphatically that there was no understanding with the U.S. regarding Israel's retention of major Jewish population centers on the West Bank. President Bush and Secretary of State Rice moved in quickly to do some "damage control," knowing that Sharon's credibility in Israel would be cut to shreds if Kurtzer's remarks were taken at face value.

But they did not deny what the ambassador had

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said; they simply restated Bush's earlier, vague commitment that "new realities on the ground" would be taken into account when the final border between Israel and a new state of Palestine is drawn. During Sharon's visit with the President in April, there seems to have been no substantive discussion of this issue. The shrill denunciation by the U.S. of plans in Israel to make Jerusalem contiguous with the populous suburb of Ma'aleh Adumim only highlights the problem.

ALLAN LEIBLER
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

Because of his extensive record of correctly foreseeing the consequences of major policies and actions in the Middle East, Norman Podhoretz has great credibility when writing about Israel's disengagement plan. Nevertheless, his article supports policies that are dangerous for the U.S. and Israel.

Mr. Podhoretz is hopeful that the two countries will enforce the provisions of the "road map" as they pertain to the Palestinians. But even as Mahmoud Abbas has welcomed terrorists into the security forces of the Palestinian Authority, Bush and Sharon have behaved as if all were progressing as stipulated. They have continued to support Abbas and the corruption surrounding his thugocracy.

Bush demanded that the Palestinians produce a leader who is not associated with terrorism. Thus, everyone pretends that Abbas was not involved with the 1972 Munich massacre, was not Arafat's bosom buddy, and did not specialize in Holocaust denial. Abbas is certainly capable of keeping the Palestinian Authority itself from promoting anti-Semitism and "martyrdom," though such hate continues to flourish as always in the Palestinian schools. If there is any doubt about Abbas's beliefs, one need look no further than the order he recently reaffirmed to execute a large number of Palestinians whose "crime" was attempting to prevent attacks on Israelis.

In his admiration for President Bush, Mr. Podhoretz lets him off the hook entirely. His administration refuses to ask questions or make demands that might "weaken" Abbas. Instead, it places pressure on the Israelis, implying that they are responsible for producing good behavior from the Palestinians. Bush's policies will ensure that Israel is prevented from ever achieving a definitive victory over its mortal enemies.

LAURA T. GUTMAN
Durham, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR:

Contrary to what Norman Podhoretz asserts, President Bush appears to be satisfied with "ritualistic condemnations of terrorism" by the Palestinian Authority. He has accepted Mahmoud Abbas's "revolving-door" arrests of terrorists. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has urged Israel to make concessions to the PA, without which, it is contended, Abbas would lack the political power to crack down on terrorism. Meanwhile, Abbas has assured the terrorists that not only will he not disarm them, he will add them to the PA's payroll. And the U.S. has continued to donate funds to the PA, despite Abbas's failure to comply with his obligations to crack down on terror and his failure to end indoctrination in bigotry and violence.

There is no reason to suppose that if the PA continues to support terrorism, the U.S. will cease to support Palestinian statehood. Bush's rhetoric has made it sound as if statehood were some sacred and immutable right for that undeserving band.

RICHARD H. SHULMAN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's article is so nuanced and qualified that one could find a half-dozen instances in which he doubts his own claim that Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan is, in the final analysis, good for Israel. This makes for a rather weak argument. Moreover, his defense of the plan is weaker than he supposes.

Mr. Podhoretz seems to agree with his interlocutor "C." that the Palestinian leadership does not regard the Israeli evacuation of Gaza as resulting from the success of the *intifada*. But in the unlikely event that Sharon had become prime minister in a time of relative peace, can anyone credibly claim that he would have advocated unilateral withdrawal?

In fact, the withdrawal can and will be seen—by ordinary Palestinians, by the leaders of the PA, and by the terrorists who are their bedfellows—as a defeat for Israel. So when they have their provisional state and return to terror, Israel can place its trust in the U.S. to do—what, exactly? Put off final-status talks? What if, as is likely, the provisional state declares independence and asks for UN recognition? If millions of Palestinian "refugees" clamor for "return" to Israel? If the provisional state imports arms and forms alliances? If Palestinians besiege the separation fence and surround and threaten Israeli communities at the de-facto border? I could go on.

Indeed, barring the implementation of policies that would be anathema internationally and to a large segment of the Israeli intelligentsia and public, Israel appears to have been checkmated by its foes. Hoping that George W. Bush will in Solomonic style put matters right is wishful thinking.

JONATHAN F. KEILER
Bowie, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR:

By speaking of policies he advocates in terms of the peace they will bring about, Norman Podhoretz imbibes the very drug that has consistently led Jews astray. More than peace, what Israel needs is to discourage aggression by making it so costly as not to be dared.

ALLEN WEINGARTEN
Monroe Township, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

While trusting President Bush and his doctrine, Norman Podhoretz would do well to bear in mind the proverb of Rabban Gamaliel in the Mishnah: "Beware of rulers, for they befriend someone only for their own benefit; they act friendly when it benefits them, but they do not stand by someone in his time of need."

GEORGE SHIMANOVICH
Freehold, New Jersey

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TO THE EDITOR:

Though I am a great admirer of Norman Podhoretz, I feel that he has lost his inner compass. The anxieties pervading the air in Israel are very much due to people like him, who "put their faith in princes" to bring about the security and peace that we all yearn for. Common sense and the lessons of the Oslo debacle would be a better remedy than such faith for the "unmistakable intimation of tears" that Mr. Podhoretz finds in the current situation.

BARBARA OBERMAN
Herzliya Pituah, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

I hope that Norman Podhoretz has asked himself one double-barreled question: what future developments would convince him that he was wrong to support the current policies of George W. Bush and Ariel Sharon, and what, afterward, would he recommend to correct things?

ISRAEL PICKHOLTZ
Elazar, Israel

TO THE EDITOR:

For Norman Podhoretz to be willing to stake Israel's future on George W. Bush and the Bush Doctrine is shortsighted. Even assuming that Bush can be trusted for the rest of his term, what happens when he is no longer in office? Mr. Podhoretz does not address Golda Meir's crucial question: "Who will guarantee the guarantor?"

SHELDON F. GOTTLIEB
Boynton Beach, Florida

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz's article is beautifully written, thorough, and compellingly argued, but he was too quick to dismiss the importance of a national referendum in Israel on the disengagement plan. He quotes a proponent of the plan who felt that Ariel Sharon was wrong to resist a referendum because it might have silenced the opposition and united the nation behind him. Mr. Podhoretz does not offer his own view, noting that the chances of holding a referendum were slim to begin with and that "it is impossible to tell whether the pullout from Gaza will presage a large-scale evacuation of Judea and Samaria, or whether it will strengthen Israel's case for maintaining its hold over large chunks of those territories."

But there is a compelling reason why a referendum should have been held—and should still be held—that has nothing to do with the merits of the plan or the difficulty in predicting its ultimate course. Without a referendum, it will be difficult to press what should be an essential demand in future negotiations: that any agreement reached between Israel and the PA must be approved by a referendum of the Palestinian public.

That way, the agreement would not simply be the work of a precarious political elite, and would be morally binding on the people. A referendum would help silence the opposition among Palestinians, unite them behind the plan, and deprive any future opposition of moral authority. Without a referendum, any agreement reached by Palestinian leaders can later be subject to challenge by those who would claim that they "sold out" Palestinian rights.

RICK RICHMAN
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Norman Podhoretz rightly applauds President Bush for being the first American president to recognize that peace in the Middle East cannot come until the Arabs renounce their existential war against Israel, and that a necessary condition for this to come about was the replacement of the Arafat regime with one that eschews terror. But as Mr. Podhoretz shows and Ariel Sharon knows well, this condition is far from sufficient. The malevolence toward Israel that the likes of Arafat have bred into generations of Palestinians cannot be switched off in an instant.

Nevertheless, as Mr. Podhoretz observes, Bush's grand initiative to transform the political culture of the Middle East from despotism to democracy, beginning in Baghdad rather than Ramallah, provides the context for Sharon's complementary strategy to assure Israel's long-term security. By limiting Israel's claim to the disputed territories, retaining the most important settlements, and insisting on borders that can be defended, Sharon's move to relinquish Gaza seizes the diplomatic initiative, insures that Israel will remain both democratic and Jewish, and helps reinforce the demand that a Palestinian state will not practice terror.

Sentiment in Israel for maintaining a Jewish presence in all the territories is understandably strong, and justifiable. But holding the territories would keep the issue of a Palestinian "right of return" on boil indefinitely, restore the initiative to the rejectionists, put Israel back into the political crosshairs of its regional and international enemies, and risk the strength of the all-important American partnership. Given the demographic and political realities, and Palestinian rejectionism notwithstanding, I agree with Mr. Podhoretz that Sharon's strategy is the optimal one.

MICHAEL BALCH
Iowa City, Iowa

NORMAN PODHORETZ writes:

I agree with almost everything my critics say about the Palestinians in general and Mahmoud Abbas in particular. Indeed, as some of them graciously acknowledge, I said most of these things myself. What divides us, then, is not the question of whether the Palestinians under Abbas have changed their stripes. Where we differ is on whether the United States under George W. Bush has changed *its* stripes.

Will Bush, as I believe, stick with the principles he enunciated on June 24, 2002? Will he, that is, continue insisting on an end to Palestinian terrorism as the necessary (but not sufficient) condition of American support for the establishment of a Palestinian state? Or will he—as Deborah Buckman, Allan Leibler, Laura T. Gutman, Richard H. Shulman, Jonathan F. Keiler, George Shimanovich, and Barbara Oberman variously contend—succumb to pressure from his own State Department and the "international community" and allow himself to be bamboozled by excuses and outright lies from Abbas the way his predecessors were by Arafat's? As my critics all seem to recognize, it is on the answer to that question that

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an assessment of Ariel Sharon's strategy ultimately rests.

Cutting to the chase, let me respond to Israel Pickholtz's challenge. "What future developments," he asks, would convince me that I was "wrong to support the current policies of George W. Bush and Ariel Sharon"?

I implicitly met this challenge in the concluding pages of my article, but here, made fully explicit for Mr. Pickholtz's benefit, is my position: I will admit to having been wrong the moment Bush goes along with—and Sharon acquiesces in—Abbas's wish to skip the first two phases of the "road map" and to jump immediately into the third and final phase.

In phase I, the Palestinians are required to "undertake visible efforts on the ground to arrest, disrupt, and restrain individuals and groups conducting and planning violent attacks on Israel anywhere," and also to mount "effective operations aimed at . . . dismantlement of terrorist capabilities and infrastructure." Only when the Palestinian Authority does this are the parties to enter phase II, in which negotiations are supposed to culminate in "the creation of a Palestinian state with provisional borders." At that point, phase III kicks in, and the process begins of forging a "permanent-status agreement [on] borders, Jerusalem, refugees, settlements."

Abbas claims that he has already fulfilled his commitments under the first two phases, and that the time has therefore come to enter into phase III. If Bush and Sharon were to accept this claim while the facts on the ground continue exposing it as a fraud (or, at best, as a self-deception), I would admit to having been wrong about them. I would also admit to having been wrong if they were to endorse the characteristically cynical preference of the "international community" for a "fast-track" approach (i.e., jumping into the third phase even though the requirements of the first two admittedly remain unmet by the Palestinians).

Yet contrary to the contention of Mr. Shulman and Laura T. Gutman that Bush and Sharon "have behaved as if all were progressing as stipulated," neither man has ever wavered on the issue of terrorism. Bush and (*pace* Deborah Buckman's reference to "a State Department notorious for taking the Arab side") his Secretary of State continue to reiterate, and in very strong language, that further progress toward statehood will be impossible unless the Palestinians take serious action against terrorism. As for Sharon, his position is that, because Abbas has thus far failed to take such action, we are not even out of what the Israeli prime minister calls "the pre-road map phase," let alone being finished with the first two phases and ready to plunge into the third.

To be sure, both Bush and Sharon are still hoping

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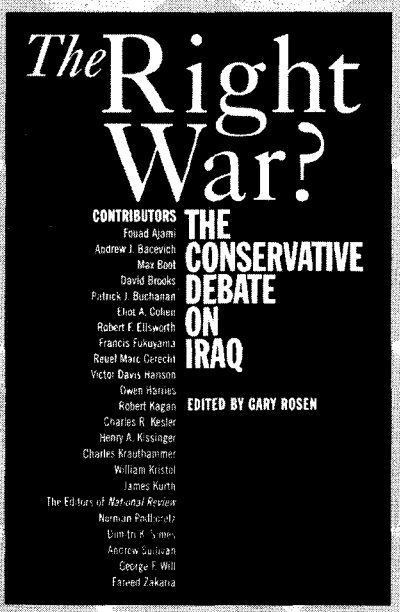

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against hope that Abbas, with a little help from them, will succeed in his declaratory policy of coopting the terrorists by drawing them into a political process. Thus Sharon has made concessions to Abbas on prisoner release and checkpoints and has also altered the route of the security fence here and there in deference to "humanitarian" considerations. Thus, too, in late May, when Abbas visited the White House, he came away with a pledge of $50 million and public words of praise.

Being strengthened in these ways will necessarily make it harder for Abbas to get away with pleading weakness to Bush as an excuse for failing to crack down on terrorism—although it seems clear that the main purpose of the aid and the praise was to bolster him in the coming elections against Hamas. In line with the same purpose, while Bush made no bones about denouncing Hamas in public as a terrorist organization, it was only in private that he pressed Abbas to become more aggressive in squelching terrorism.

That he did so in private was confirmed even by unnamed "Palestinian officials" who expressed their pleasure at Bush's public treatment of Abbas, but also "indicated" to the *New York Times* that

> Mr. Bush had been tough on the need for them to do more to dismantle militant groups like Hamas with a history of attacks on Israel. In particular, administration officials say they are unhappy with . . . Mr. Abbas's efforts to negotiate with Hamas . . . rather than trying to disarm it by force.

I for one would place my bet more on sticks than on carrots, but the mixed Bush-Sharon approach may conceivably be worth a shot, and it is in any event still a far cry from declaring that the job has already been done.

It is also true, conversely, that the Bush administration keeps reminding Israel of its own commitments under the road map on the expansion of settlements. Linking this kind of talk with the condemnation of Arab terrorism admittedly belongs to the old framework of moral equivalence rejected by Bush on June 24, 2002; but it is surely trumped by the assurance he gave to Sharon in his letter of April 14, 2004:

> In light of new realities on the ground, including already existing major Israeli population centers, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final-status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949 [i.e., the '67 borders].

This assurance was confirmed in very forceful terms by Secretary of State Rice in the wake of the Kurtzer flap to which Mr. Leibler refers. It was then subsequently reaffirmed in even more unambiguous terms by the President himself during Sharon's visit to Crawford this past April. Furthermore, when Abbas said after his own visit to the White House in May that the letter had been "misunderstood," the administration, dispelling the sly suggestion that he had received any such impression from Bush, issued the following statement:

> President Bush . . . reiterated to President Abbas American policy with regard to the region. That policy has been well spelled out in speeches in April and June 2002, in his discussions with Prime Minister Sharon in Washington and in Crawford, Texas, and in his letter to Prime Minister Sharon dated April 14, 2004. The principles and positions set out at that time remain the policy of the United States.

But what about the vagueness in the April 14 letter that bothers Mr. Leibler (for example, on the question of how Ma'aleh Adumim can be made "contiguous" with Jerusalem)? Obviously, the intention here is to defer such issues until the final-status negotiations under phase III when, under the more propitious conditions that will presumably have developed by then, they will become more amenable to resolution.

There is, however, a very long way to go before phase III can be reached. In my article, I predicted that the process would probably get stalled in phase II, but by now I have begun wondering when it will even get out of the "pre-road map phase." Which brings me back to my trust in Bush, and specifically in his threat to withdraw American support for the establishment of a Palestinian state if the PA is unwilling and/or unable to call off the dogs of terrorist war.

Suppose, as Deborah Buckman asks, that the Palestinians "are not as interested in a state of their own as they are in destroying the Jewish presence here?" Certainly this was true of them under Arafat, but people who know far more than I do about Abbas and the post-Arafat Palestinian condition say that it is not true of them today. If those people are wrong, then Deborah Buckman and others of like mind will be consoled by yet another instance of the famous Palestinian propensity never to miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity. Correlatively, Israel will be faced with a third *intifada* and will be forced back into doing what it did in defeating the second *intifada*. Only this time, with the fence and the withdrawal from Gaza completed, it will have stronger and tighter defensive lines, as well as the full freedom to conduct the kinds of offensive military operations that proved so successful then.

Under such circumstances, I am confident that Israel would again be given a "green light" by George W. Bush. But I do not believe that it will come to that. As against the worst-case scenarios painted by some of my correspondents, Michael Balch's take on the situation seems to me far more plausible. I therefore commend his very skillful summation of the case to them and to all the others (except for Rick Richman, who has no need of it but whose commensurately skillful summation of the case for a referendum has been rendered academic by the march of events).

Finally, there is Sheldon F. Gottlieb's question: "what happens when Bush is no longer in office?" In response to this, I can only repeat the expectation I have

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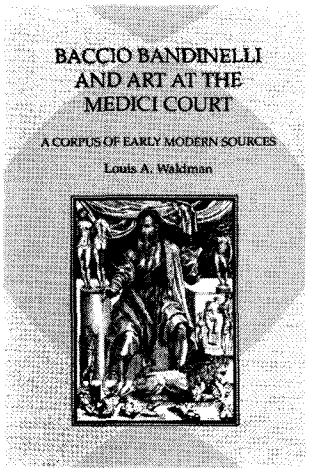

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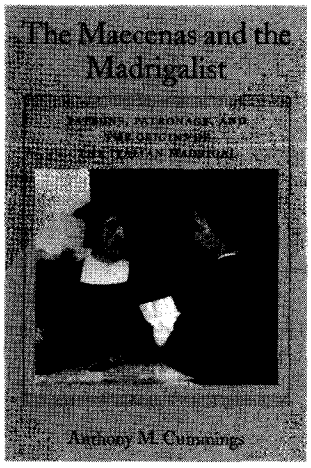

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voiced a number of times about the Bush Doctrine: that by the end of its author's second term, it will already have done so much to transform the broader Middle East—and therefore the context in which the Arab war against Israel has heretofore been waged—and will have acquired so much momentum that his successor will be unable and indeed unwilling to stop or reverse its course.

Women's Choices

TO THE EDITOR:

Ruth R. Wisse writes powerfully and passionately about the campaign against Harvard President Lawrence Summers; it has been, as she suggests, a shameless stampede ["'Dear Ellen'; or, Sexual Correctness at Harvard," April].

But her defense of Summers repeats the old canard about the incompatibility of motherhood and intellectual work. Summers asserted that employers want workers who will essentially be married to their jobs, and that "this is a level of commitment that a much higher fraction of married men [than married women] have historically been prepared to make." In other words, men are more likely than women to neglect family for the sake of work.

Until very recently, such assumptions were almost universally accepted. Academic committees openly rejected the applications of young married women, believing that motherhood would keep them from pulling their professional weight. I learned this in a very personal way while in graduate school at Washington University in St. Louis. As the dean of arts and sciences said of me to my department chairman in the early 1970's, "She's a married female with two children; you can't give her a fellowship. Students in that demographic are not reliable." It was only because I received a special fellowship for women that I was able to continue toward my Ph.D. and a career in the academy.

Statements like Summers's have dramatically affected the reproductive decisions of talented and ambitious women who have not been as fortunate as I—or as Ruth Wisse. Facing environments that incorporate a mistrust of motherhood, many postpone childbearing because they do not want to be suspected of lacking commitment to their work. Sad to say, some of my sister feminists have also reinforced anti-motherhood messages by heaping scorn on those who say that fertility is not an even playing field stretching from the onset of menstruation until menopause. Many women, when they are finally established firmly enough at work to risk having a baby, encounter biological difficulties.

Ruth Wisse urges young women to understand that motherhood is on the whole a far more satisfying and important endeavor than any paid job. If employers discriminate against women because mothers are more devoted than fathers, so be it. But as women juggle demanding careers and family needs, they often discover a positive corollary: their husbands become more engaged, effective fathers. At afternoon faculty meetings, young male professors often plead for promptness so they can drive in carpools. Male colleagues bring sick children to the office to while away the hours on an unused computer. Many women—and apparently many men—are capable of the juggling act.

According to Ruth Wisse, fellowships awarded exclusively to women, or other special considerations in hiring, are unfair because they discriminate against men. But discrimination against women, while perhaps more subtle than in the past, remains pervasive in academic life. Many women candidates would not get to the "short list" if diversity officers did not insist on it. Women—especially mothers—need policies that will continue to open doors for them that others are anxious to close. They need people like Ruth Wisse to be advocates on their behalf.

SYLVIA BARACK FISHMAN
Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

I should like to add a somewhat different perspective to Ruth R. Wisse's wise and thoughtful discussion of the debate about women and tenure at Harvard. When I was a graduate student at Harvard in the early 1970's, there were no more than four or five tenured women in the entire faculty of arts and sciences.

One, whom I knew personally, was for many years only a "lecturer." She was finally granted tenure on the basis of a publication record that put many senior faculty to shame. This arrangement, in which she taught a full-time load for half-time pay, had advantages for her at a time when she was raising three young children. As she once put it to me, she felt that she could honorably cut back her full-time schedule if a family emergency ever required it (so far as I know, it never did). I suspect that her public expressions of contentment with this arrangement were not entirely sincere. In any case, the arrangement was most unusual, and would not have been feasible had her husband's income been less generous.

A second vignette: as a high-school student in Seattle in the 60's, I recall seeing, with a friend, a picture of the graduating class of the University of Washington medical school. It was a sea of men—around 250—among whom were sprinkled four women. You can imagine its effect upon my companion—a brilliant girl and until then an aspiring doctor. She decided on the spot that the odds were better in nursing.

A final story: I arrived in Buffalo, New York in the fall of 1974, where my husband, who was a year ahead of me in graduate school, had been hired as an assistant professor. When I sought employment, I encountered "anti-nepotism" rules that kept academically qualified wives (often with Ph.D.'s from first-rate programs) from teaching at the university. I avoided the rule in question by agreeing to "teach for free" and off the books. I also encountered, I regret to say, many unhappy wives and failing marriages.

I mention these episodes not to arouse indignation but to try to re-create the context out of which the current "feminist" move-

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Jews praying in a synagogue.

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David B. Ruderman is Joseph Meyerhoff Professor of Modern Jewish History and Director of the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Previously, he taught at Yale University and the University of Maryland, where he was instrumental in establishing both institutions' Judaic Studies programs. Professor Ruderman is president of the American Academy for Jewish Research, and has a lifetime achievement award from the National Foundation for Jewish Culture.

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ment emerged, and to suggest the intransigence of certain related trade-offs. It is important to keep in mind that the "prejudice" against women in the academy was not altogether unfounded. Why, after all, lavish an expensive graduate or professional education on a student who is likely to drop out (or only work part-time) in order to raise a family? Ruth Wisse would like to keep "legal equality" while at the same time urging a return to more traditional, family-centered roles for women. But, should young women heed such advice en masse, would it still be reasonable or fair to expect universities and employers to admit and hire them on an "equal" basis? In sum: what is needed is less anger and more serious thought about how we might more happily reconcile equality of opportunity with the having and rearing of children.

SUSAN SHELL
Boston College
Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

The controversies swirling around Lawrence Summers are nothing new for Harvard presidents. But the particular controversy over women, which Ruth R. Wisse addresses in her brilliant article—well, that's a different story. As she so eloquently notes, it was not that Summers was wrong in requesting a broad-based inquiry into women's progress in scientific careers but that he did not go far enough. This inquiry should be expanded to other fields, including my own, business.

Charles Eliot, Harvard's president from 1869 to 1909, was as quintessentially politically incorrect in his day as Summers is now. Eliot championed women's education, elective courses, and clinical and case-based pedagogy, among many other radical reforms. None came easily: his move to rescind required attendance at chapel was adopted only after a decade of bitter debate.

Like Summers, Eliot believed in an equality based on merit, not on birth. Not surprisingly, he also championed tough grading. As a young professor of mathematics and chemistry, Eliot administered Harvard's first written examinations. Small wonder his languid peers denied him tenure.

History does not always treat the politically-incorrect Harvard president kindly. James Conant, Harvard's president from 1933 to 1952, was flayed during his tenure for his failure to damn the Nazis, his tacit support of a quota on Jewish students, and his advocacy of using the atomic bomb against civilian targets in Japan.

To me, Summers is clearly on the Eliot side of the politically incorrect—a person of great vision with the courage, guile, and charm needed to implement it.

I personally know that women *are* good at science. After all, it was the 99th-percentile scores I earned in my SAT's that convinced MIT to admit me, the first enrollee from my obscure Yeshiva University High School for Girls. At that time, before coed dormitories, housing for MIT's female students was so limited that their SAT scores and other admission criteria *had* to exceed substantially those of males. Yet nearly half of this extraordinarily talented group dropped out before graduation, and all too few progressed to significant careers.

Why? That is Summers's very good question. And it applies elsewhere than in science. I have observed similar patterns among my brilliantly talented women students at the Harvard Business School. Women account for half or nearly half of medical and law students but only 30 percent of MBA enrollees, although the MBA degree is life-altering and women enjoy their MBA education and benefit from it as much as men.

My hypothesis about the relative paucity of women MBA's and scientists is that they face unsatisfactory career paths. Some women have succeeded in big business. By 2004, sixteen women led *Fortune 1000* companies and others headed large private firms, great universities, and nonprofits. They did good: the eight firms headed by female CEO's posted a 52-percent return in 2004 versus 27 percent for all large companies. They did well, too: a 2003 report noted that Pat Russo, CEO of Lucent, pulled in $39 million.

But many women have rejected big-corporation careers, opting to become entrepreneurs instead. The women MBA's of the class of 1992 were much more likely to be self-employed. Was this movement out of big corporations a push or a pull? Both; but the push was mighty powerful. One research group determined that corporate culture was the number-one reason why women left. They wanted greater job satisfaction. Those executive women who remained were often less assertive and more risk-averse than their male counterparts. They used their mentors more for protection than for advancement. Why were they hunkered down? Noted one corporate escapee: "the brass ring ends up thrust through your nose. . . . The possibility of being ousted not for performance but for politics is just too thick up there."

The personal costs were substantial, too: 27 percent of these women did not marry, or postponed marriage. The children of the women CEO's whom I know personally came from their husbands' former marriages. Few have had and reared their own.

The young women who avoid MBA programs, and perhaps science too, may well view their degree as a ticket to an inflexible, political career in big bureaucratic organizations that will drain them of their capacities.

REGINA E. HERZLINGER
Harvard Business School
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you for publishing Ruth R. Wisse's wonderful essay. We are a hearty band, we few academic women who stand outside the feminist majority on our campuses, trying to talk common sense to both our male and female students. This includes trying to dispel the pernicious notion that women can "have it all," which often obscures serious examination of what they most truly want.

For too many years, young women have been taught to think that the most difficult choice before them is deciding which profession to enter, and how to compete successfully with men once they are in it. The need to find a husband or to think about having and raising children often seems to be very far in the back of their minds. They blithely

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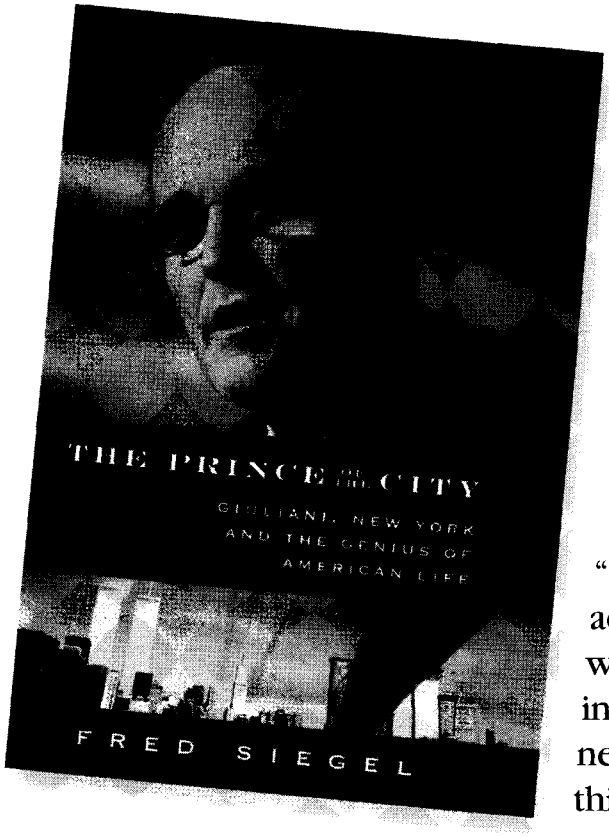
The Prince of the City

Giuliani, New York, and the Genius of American Life



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assume that these things will take care of themselves.

JEAN YARBROUGH
Bowdoin College
Brunswick, Maine

TO THE EDITOR:

I was puzzled by the reaction to Lawrence Summers's remarks about women and careers in the sciences. I read the transcript and found nothing offensive. In particular, the reaction of Nancy Hopkins, the MIT biologist who walked out on Summers's talk so as to avoid "throwing up," struck me more as a testament to her insecurity than as a demonstration of principle. If she was confident that Summers was wrong, she could have simply disagreed.

I believe that Summers was genuinely trying to provoke a constructive dialogue about obstacles for women in the sciences. The hysteria of critics like Hopkins undermines the very cause that they purport to advance, and has no place in a climate of academic rigor and scientific development.

SUSANNA STRATMANN
Stuttgart, Germany

TO THE EDITOR:

Ruth R. Wisse is correct to describe perpetual discontent as feminism's legacy to women. The initial meeting of Northwestern University Medical School's equivalent of the Harvard Women's Caucus featured a female physician from London who crossed the Atlantic in order to teach the women faculty how to recognize "microinequities." Apparently, my colleagues at Northwestern could not see how silly it was to complain about inequities that they had thus far failed to recognize. The episode helped convince me that women with advanced graduate training in science join foolish clubs as readily as do junior-high-school girls, and with as little forethought. It obviously requires more than higher education to avoid following the madding crowd.

CAROL K. THARP
Northwestern University Medical School
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR:

Ruth R. Wisse's article is an island of sanity amid the teapot tempest created by the candid pronouncements of Lawrence Summers. That men and women's brains differ in essential ways is not an opinion; it is a fact. As the neurobiologist Larry Cahill recently noted, "neuroscientists are uncovering anatomical, chemical, and functional differences between the brains of men and women," and they are "working to determine how these sex-based variations relate to differences in male and female cognition and behavior." Present knowledge perhaps does not allow us to determine in what way these inherent differences are reflected in the performance of complex tasks, but the point is that they exist—and *vive la différence*!

Universities should make sure that women who want to retain their nurturing roles while pursuing careers in the hard sciences are given all the necessary facilities for doing so, such as free child care. But that requires financial commitments from administrations typically strapped for funds. It is cheaper to subvert admissions and hiring processes, which is why that is normally done.

DIDIER DE FONTAINE
University of California
Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Perhaps I am naïve, but I suspect that some of the heat of the controversy over the distribution of women in the elite precincts of math and science comes from ignorance of statistical relationships. I agree with Lawrence Summers and Ruth R. Wisse that women's choices are probably the most important reason for their under-representation among researchers in, say, quantum mechanics. But what if women's choices played no role?

It need hardly be said that if the statistical distribution of talent was precisely identical across the sexes, the relative frequencies of men and women with the *talent* to be on the science faculty at Harvard would be identical as well. But such a distribution is highly unlikely for any human characteristic, much less for mental acuity, which is a congeries of abilities.

A simple analysis of the properties of the "normal" distribution demonstrates that relatively small differences in either the dispersions or the means of mental acuity for men and women—differences that would be imperceptible in the normal activities of life—can reflect stark differences in the frequencies at the very "tails" of the distribution. And it is from the very tip of the right-hand tails that the science faculties at elite educational institutions are drawn.

To some, this will still be unacceptable. They demand that men and women be not merely approximately equal in intellectual endowments but identically so in every sub-category. I know of no ontology that commands this result, no ethics or politics that demands it, and no empirical evidence that suggests it. To insist that such a position is the only acceptable one to voice in public is an embarrassment to intelligent discourse in general and to the academy in particular.

LLOYD COHEN
George Mason University
Arlington, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR:

I am often appalled by what I see and hear from our elite universities. Ruth R. Wisse's article has made me feel that, if someone like her is teaching at a place like Harvard, perhaps all is not lost. Our most prestigious universities may not be completely devoid of common sense and rational thought after all.

BRUCE HAMILTON
Shamong, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

Though I do not agree with everything in Ruth R. Wisse's article, I admire the clarity of her argument, the force of her prose, and her uncanny ability to cut to the bone. I have followed the Lawrence Summers controversy for weeks, and hers was the first article that made me rethink some of my own suppositions. Thank you.

SAM WINEBURG
Stanford University
Stanford California

RUTH R. WISSE writes:

The anecdotal evidence supplied by my correspondents is a reminder of how dramatically women's expectations have changed since the 1960's, when many stormed the workforce hoping, as Jean Yarbrough says, that they could "have it all." Beneficiaries of develop-

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ments in science and technology, women gained control over their reproductive systems, enjoyed medical advances that almost eliminated infant mortality, and profited from an array of products and services that facilitated every aspect of raising children.

I would have expected the response to all this bounty to be gratitude—*thanksgiving* for lengthening lifespans and multiplying opportunities in a land of plenty. Instead, there arose a culture of grievance that has poisoned the very freedoms that women won.

Admittedly the culture of grievance embraces far more than feminism. Every living soul who has ever made a career in a university has tales to tell of discrimination leveled against his or her person or group. At the very first departmental meeting I attended at Harvard, my new colleagues were lamenting the barriers their graduate students faced in a national competition because of widespread resentment of the "Harvard name."

The question, as always, is what should be done. The prejudice that Jews experienced during their entry into the sciences was far harsher than that felt by women since the 1960's. This did not prevent Jews from becoming leading scientists, or from winning over 40 percent of U.S. Nobel prizes in medicine. Will women accomplish the same? Jews excelled by driving themselves very hard, as if harkening to the grandmother's advice in Isaac Babel's story, "You Must Know Everything." Modern feminism, when it tries to win advantages under the motto, "You Must Have Everything," demeans the women it pretends to champion, and corrupts the institutions where it presses its demands.

Sylvia Barack Fishman believes I should be joining her in promoting group preferences for women. But why should she or I advocate discriminatory favoritism on behalf of the most privileged group ever to emerge in this or any other society? We are certainly obliged to ensure equal opportunity for all who want to compete on equal terms, but not at the expense of measurable standards of merit.

If women are not advancing in some areas as far or as fast as men, that is most likely because they have more choices than men. As Susan Shell and Regina E. Herzlinger attest in different ways, the desire of most women to reconcile work with family must necessarily complicate professional performance and the workplaces that try to accommodate their needs. The more competitive a workplace, the less allowance it can afford to make for extraneous considerations. Men and women who want to compete at the highest levels in the most demanding tasks have always had to sacrifice other goals to that end. If the competition slackens in one place, we may be sure that it will pick up in another.

I am unqualified to comment on findings cited by Didier de Fontaine and Lloyd Cohen that identify innate differences between men and women as contributing factors to differentials of talent. But watching the recent *Ultimate Tournament of Champions* on *Jeopardy!*, I was struck by how honestly this television game show has been forced to confront sexual differences.

Closely self-monitored to permit no bias, the program tries to include as many female contestants as it can. But by the time we got to the semifinals, all had been eliminated; in this kind of competition, men clearly prevail. Were *Jeopardy!* a university, my female colleagues would be forming a caucus either to shut down the program or to demand changes in the rules so as to render it "kinder" to women. And the administration, just like Harvard's now, would be creating six task forces to correct the imbalance.

Far from influencing impressionable young women to curtail their ambitions, as Sylvia Barack Fishman fears they did, the remarks by Lawrence Summers were exploited by feminists to press for advantage. Their strategy of intimidation—in the event, highly successful—was a substitute for the "serious thought" that Susan Shell encourages. I am therefore all the more grateful for the thoughtful comments offered here by academic colleagues who have witnessed similar episodes on their own campuses. I am also very happy to have confirmed some readers in their sanity, and to have provoked others to second thoughts.

Reforming the UN

TO THE EDITOR:

Michael Soussan accurately and concisely describes the problems, many of them self-inflicted, plaguing the United Nations ["Can the UN Be Fixed?," April]. He rightly wonders whether merely adding more seats to the UN's key organs will change the organization's pattern of failed performance on issues like genocide and terrorism. I also agree with Mr. Soussan that on the question of preventing genocide, the basic problem is not a lack of UN authority but a lack of political will. He correctly reminds us of the world body's failures in Kosovo, Rwanda, Darfur, and, of course, Iraq.

In singling out the UN's failures to deal with rogue or terrorist states, however, Mr. Soussan overlooks the fact that the UN's primary influence derives not from any intrinsic political or military power but from the values it represents. A profound part of its legitimacy flows from the added value that the UN demonstrably provides to the quality of life of men, women, and children throughout the world. Linking peoples' local interests and concerns to larger issues is the goal of a growing community of self-organizing groups and nongovernmental organizations (NGO's) that have become skilled at advancing their agendas for change through the UN. Some 225 NGO's were represented at a 1972 conference in Stockholm; that number had risen to 2,100 at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing.

In arguing that the UN's first priority should be to promote democracy, Mr. Soussan expects too much of it. Democracy is obviously the most desirable outcome for all states. But the road to democracy lies in the UN's bringing to bear its moral and institutional authority—identifying failed

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states, combating the denial of human rights, halting the promulgation of genocide—through more active engagement with the world's peoples, NGO's, and the private sector.

Simply urging non-democracies to change their stripes—whether by tinkering with the UN's legalistic formulas or by threatening non-democracies with exclusion from the body—will not break the moral logjam. The UN certainly can do much better in the management of its own affairs. But just preaching to or threatening the unconverted is not likely to achieve the goals of the UN or the United States.

AMBASSADOR DONALD M. BLINKEN
New York City

MICHAEL SOUSSAN writes:

Ambassador Donald M. Blinken makes several important points about the nature of the United Nations' work, especially its valuable efforts to rescue people in distress around the world. He believes, however, that I expect too much of the UN by arguing that it could do much more to promote democracy. He also believes that there are humanitarian values that supersede, say, the application of Article 6 of the UN Charter, which stipulates that member states that consistently violate UN rules may be expelled from the organization.

Were the drafters of the UN charter wrong to include Article 6? At the time, they may have been unrealistic in expecting UN members to play by the rules. The cold war forced upon the organization a certain moral relativism—an institutional culture that, to a large degree, still prevails today. But the world has changed dramatically since 1945. The trend is toward democratization, and the UN can do much more to be in step with it.

The risk of not doing so is that the UN will lose the confidence of the democracies that now constitute a majority of its members, countries that face an increased threat from terrorism and the dictatorial states that sponsor it. This does not mean that it will be easy for the UN to become a more effective force for democracy. As Ambassador Blinken rightly points out, the UN often requires some level of cooperation from dictatorial states if it is to aid the people who need it most. But perhaps we can agree to debate *how* this change must occur, rather than *whether* it should.

Pinstripes & Red Sox

TO THE EDITOR:

As a fellow member of the Yankee diaspora now living in Boston, I commend Charles Dellheim for his excellent article ["A Yankees Fan in Red Sox Nation," April]. It might be worthwhile to remind ourselves that there is a latent benefit to last year's postseason collapse. With the Red Sox' reversal of the "curse of the Bambino" comes responsibility. We now know that they can win. When they don't, it is not because it is written in the stars, or because some curse is guiding their fate.

I have quickly learned what baseball means to the Boston psyche. After the Red Sox' dramatic loss to the Yankees in the 2003 American League Championship Series, the emergency-room psychiatric ward where I was a resident swelled with young men wanting to "talk." Almost all of these visitors exhibited indulgent melancholia, not true psychopathology. I was struck by how helpful such primitive group defenses as "the curse" and "it was inevitable!" could be in the face of their loss.

No longer. Now, it is about cowhide balls being slung at ash bats, and the mortal talent behind each duking-it-out for who will be on top. In other words, it is about baseball. May the best team win—unless it's the Red Sox.

STEVEN KLEINER
Brookline, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Notwithstanding Charles Dellheim's allegiance to the Yankees, I very much appreciate his article. I understand the challenge of being a Yankees fan here in Boston: it is not unlike that of a poet who reads verse in praise of George W. Bush in the People's Republic of Cambridge.

At the end of his article, Mr. Dellheim writes, "Chalk one up for Red Sox nation, past and present, for the great ones like Ted Williams and Dom DiMaggio who are gone." Although the Splendid Splinter left this mortal coil in 2002, rumors of Dom's passing, to paraphrase Mark Twain, are greatly exaggerated. He turned 88 this past February.

AARON GOLDSTEIN
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

I have no sympathy for a Yankee fan who lives in New England, being a Red Sox fan who grew up in suburban New York among Yankees, Dodgers, and Giants fans. I write only to express my puzzlement at Charles Dellheim's slight of the baseball historian Frederick G. Lieb. Mr. Dellheim writes that Lieb used a "heinous anti-Jewish stereotype" in describing Harry Frazee, the Red Sox owner who sold Babe Ruth to the Yankees, as "an evil genie."

To be sure, anyone who reads Lieb's 1947 book, *The Boston Red Sox*, will become aware of his dislike for what Frazee did, and any Red Sox fan will share that dislike; but there is nothing in the writing that suggests animosity toward the man, nor is there any mention that Frazee was Jewish, or that he acted as only a Jew could have done in selling Ruth to New York. Can't anyone be an evil genie?

TOM PUTNAM
Buffalo, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

I happened to read Charles Dellheim's article in the lobby of the Seaport Hotel in Boston on April 11. The Red Sox' 2005 home opener was that day, and around me too many Red Sox fans were watching the pre-game championship celebration at Fenway Park on the large-screen TV. It was painful being there, but Mr. Dellheim gave me some solace.

DAN LIBERTI
Naperville, Illinois

CHARLES DELLHEIM writes:

Baseball continues to serve as a literal and symbolic field of American dreams, as Steven Kleiner's perceptive letter suggests. It is no wonder that in

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Boston, young men fell victim to "indulgent melancholia" (is that covered by insurance?) and wanted to "talk" after the Red Sox' 2003 ALCS defeat. Victory entails celebration, but defeat demands explanation or at least consolation. I doubt that I would have written a word about baseball had the Yankees not suffered their historic collapse during the last four games of the 2004 ACLS. And I agree with Dr. Kleiner that the "curse of the Bambino" offered a primitive group defense for the more primitive members of Red Sox nation. It also turned mundane errors on the field and managerial mistakes in the dugout into errors of truly mythic proportions.

Like other literary forms, writing about baseball draws on a variety of tropes, some of which are more dangerous than others. Tom Putnam suggests that I slighted baseball historian Fred Lieb by suggesting that he used a heinous anti-Semitic stereotype, "evil genie," to describe, and denounce, Harry Frazee. I do not know enough about Lieb to comment on what he thought, or did not think, about Jews. But I will stand by the point that the "evil genie" is a traditional anti-Semitic notion. It is clearly related to ancient superstitions about the "devilishness" of shrewd Jews who outwit honest Christians through alleged magical powers. Mr. Putnam is quite right to suggest that anyone can be an evil genie, but Lieb's metaphor contained an anti-Semitic subtext irrespective of his intentions.

I would like to thank Aaron Goldstein not only for his willingness to tolerate the existence of a Yankees fan in Red Sox nation, but also for graciously rescuing the great Dom DiMaggio from a premature passing. Watching the 2005 Fenway Park opener, I was relieved to learn that Dom was alive and kicking, if not batting and catching. Let me also thank several readers for taking the time to point out, privately, another goof. Enos Slaughter, who was the oldest man on the Yankees when I was a child (but who was younger then than I am now), was, of course, nicknamed "Country" because he came from rural parts rather than, as I wrote, for his part in the 1946 World Series.

Dhimmitude

TO THE EDITOR:

I read with much interest David Warren's review of my book, *Eurabia*, and I am obliged to respond to a few of his comments [Books in Review, April]. Contrary to what Mr. Warren suggests, I never claimed that a formal structure was created "to accommodate the transfer of Europe to Islamic rule." As I explained several times, the end result was not what had been at the beginning. Shortsighted policies, as well as political and economic interests and mistaken assessments, have concurred to bring Europe into a culture of submission to Islam, or "dhimmitude."

Perhaps, seen from America, the "Euro-Arab Dialogue" of the European Union is "a small component of a much vaster Euro-bureaucracy," but within Europe it has determined domestic policies that will influence the continent's politics, demography, culture, religious character, and institutions for years to come. It already affects the school systems, especially in England, France, and Denmark, and thereby will modify the character of the continent.

The Euro-Arab framework also has structured Europe's policies toward the Arab-Muslim world, America, and Israel. It has generated the Barcelona Declaration, the Mediterranean Partnership, and the EU Dialogue Between Peoples and Cultures Around the Mediterranean, with its Anna Lindh Foundation. These are political and economic instruments that shape the entire European-Mediterranean strategy as planned by the European Council of Ministers and the European Commission, which represent the highest political and executive level of the EU. The Euro-Arab Dialogue is not the expedient device of Euro-bureaucrats, as Mr. Warren suggests, but the common vision of European leaders, heads of state, and governments.

The "authoritative pronouncements" whose alleged absence leads Mr. Warren to dismiss the political significance of the Euro-Arab Dialogue are in fact plentiful. They appear in the many official endorsements over the years of Arab-League policy in the Middle East by representatives of the European Community—and to this day by the EU foreign policy chief, Javier Solana. As for the supposedly missing "political bricks and mortar," they are evident in the meetings and discussions held among the leaders of the European Community (and, later, the European Union) in Brussels and other European cities. It is through such negotiations that the policies of the numerous states making up the European Union are determined and implemented.

BAT YE'OR
Geneva, Switzerland

DAVID WARREN writes:

Bat Ye'or may well be right that things look different from America. The purport of my review was that she had correctly diagnosed a broad tendency in Europe to adopt a "dhimmi"-like posture of accommodation toward the increasingly aggressive Islamic presence inside and around the continent. But the bureaucratic measures she presents as causes, I take as symptoms. Our views seem to converge at the point where she insists that "the end result" of the European Union's formal Euro-Arab dialogue "is not what had been at the beginning."

Correction

In Fred Siegel's review of *Ladies and Gentlemen, The Bronx Is Burning* [Books in Review, June], a magazine article with the title "Can New York Survive?" was mistakenly attributed to *New York* magazine in 1977. The article appeared in the *New York Times Magazine* in 1969. We regret the error.—ED.

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Aid to Israel

Does the U.S. get its money's worth?

Israel and Egypt are the two largest recipients of U.S. aid. For its"participation" in the Gulf War, Egypt was forgiven its indebtedness of $9 billion. Israel pays its bills. It receives $2.8 billion every year. Of that amount, $2.0 billion is for military aid and $0.8 billion for economic aid. It's fair to ask whether this is a good deal for the American taxpayer.

What are the facts?

The only democratic country in the Middle East. Israel is the only genuinely democratic state in the Middle East. It is committed to freedom and equality, and the rule of law. It embodies the fundamental values that are in tune with those of America and that America has traditionally supported. Israel's military and political importance in the Middle East and its strategic position stabilize the entire area, including the oil fields of the Persian Gulf. During the Cold War, it was America's indispensable rampart against the inroads and expansionist ambitions of the Soviet Union. It is now a western bulwark against the aggressive intents of Iran and other bellicose nations that threaten the interests of the United States. It is a most reliable partner in the promotion of Western strategic interests and in the stabilization of the Middle East. Over 20% of its budget goes for defense, compared to 7% in the U.S. and less than 1% in Japan. Israel has one of the best armies in the world. Its navy and air force are the major deterrent forces in the eastern Mediterranean.

Israel effectively secures NATO's southeastern flank, without having a single American soldier stationed in its territory. Still, the superb military installations, the air and sea lift capabilities, the equipment and food storage capacity, and the trained manpower to maintain and repair sophisticated U.S. equipment are instantly at hand in Israel. It is the only country in the area that makes itself available to the United States, in any contingency.

Only fraction of aid stays in Israel. There is no other country in the Middle East except Israel that can be considered to have a stable government or populace friendly to the United States. There is much danger that any military aid to Arab countries, and military equipment given or sold to them, will suffer the same fate as the untold billions of dollars and priceless military secrets that were lost to our enemies in the debacle of Iran. Is Saudi Arabia more stable? Egypt? Jordan? Kuwait? Judge for yourself!

> "American aid to Israel is a two-way street. Aid to Israel is America's greatest defense bargain."

Only a fraction of the aid given stays in Israel. By far the largest share remains with American defense contractors. Peter McPherson, former administrator of the Agency for International Development, estimated that every billion dollars of aid to Israel creates 60,000 to 70,000 jobs in the United States.

Compared to the $2.0 billion yearly military aid to Israel, the U.S. contributes more than $130 billion(!) every year to the defense of Europe and more than $30 billion to the defense of Japan, Korea, and the Far East. Over 300,000 U.S. troops are stationed with NATO and over 30,000 U.S. troops in the Far East. In contrast, not one single U.S. soldier needs to be stationed and put at risk in Israel. U.S. military analysts estimate that the U.S. would have to spend the equivalent of $150 billion a year in the Middle East to maintain a force equivalent to Israel's.

There are many other benefits that the U.S. military derives from Israel. Israel is the only country that has gained battlefield experience with U.S. weapons. This experience is immediately conveyed to the U.S. Enormous quantities of captured Soviet weapons and defense systems were turned over to the U.S. military for analysis. Israel, in the light of its experience, continually modifies U.S. weapons systems. For instance, Israeli scientists have made over 200 improvements in the F-15 alone and similar improvements, mostly in avionics, in later-generation planes. It would be more in line with reality if military aid to Israel were classified as part of the defense budget, rather than as "aid". Israel is truly America's unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Middle East. Former President Reagan put it well: "The fall of Iran has increased Israel's value as perhaps the only remaining strategic asset in the region on which the United States can fully rely." American aid to Israel is a two-way street. Aid to Israel is America's greatest defense bargain.

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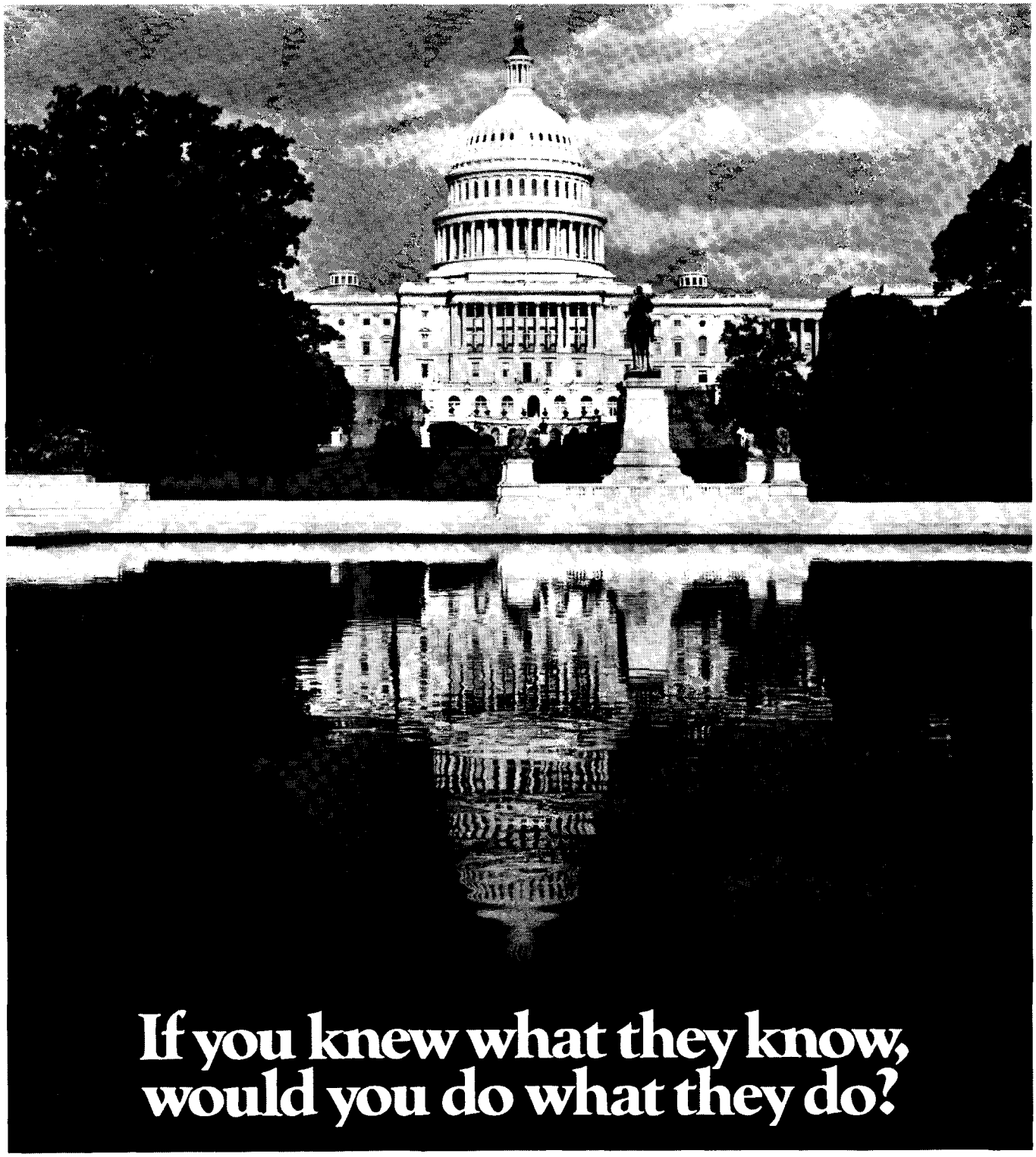

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Commentary
July–August 2005

The Neoconservative Convergence

Charles Krauthammer

THE POST-COLD-WAR era has seen a remarkable ideological experiment: over the last fifteen years, each of the three major American schools of foreign policy—realism, liberal internationalism, and neoconservatism—has taken its turn at running things. (A fourth school, isolationism, has a long pedigree, but has yet to recover from Pearl Harbor and probably never will; it remains a minor source of dissidence with no chance of becoming a governing ideology.) There is much to be learned from this unusual and unplanned experiment.

The era began with the senior George Bush and a classically realist approach. This was Kissingerism without Kissinger—although Brent Scowcroft, James Baker, and Lawrence Eagleburger filled in admirably. The very phrase the administration coined to describe its vision—the New World Order—captured the core idea: an orderly world with orderly rulers living in stable equilibrium.

The elder Bush had two enormous achievements to his credit: the peaceful reunification of Germany, still historically undervalued, and the expulsion of Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, which maintained the status quo in the Persian Gulf. Nonetheless, his administration suffered from the classic shortcoming of realism: a failure of imagination. Bush brilliantly managed the reconstitution of Germany and the restoration of the independence of the East European states, but he could not see far enough to the liberation of the Soviet peoples themselves. His notorious "chicken Kiev" speech of 1991, warning Ukrainians against "suicidal nationalism," seemed to prefer Soviet stability to the risk of fifteen free and independent states.

But we must not be retrospectively too severe. Democracy in Ukraine was hard to envision even a few years ago, let alone in the early 1990's, and Bush's hesitancy did not stop the march of liberation in the Soviet sphere. It was the failure of imagination in Bush's other area of triumph—Iraq—that had truly stark, even tragic, consequences.

Leaving Saddam in place, and declining to support the Kurdish and Shiite uprisings that followed the first Gulf war, begat more than a decade of Iraqi suffering, rancor among our war allies, diplomatic isolation for the U.S., and a crumbling regime of UN sanctions. All this led ultimately and inevitably to a second war that could have been fought far more easily—and with the enthusiastic support of Iraq's Shiites, who to this day remain suspicious of our intentions—in 1991. One recalls with dismay that the first two of Osama bin Laden's announced justifications for his declaration of war on America were the garrisoning of the holy places (i.e., Saudi Arabia) by crusader (i.e., American) soldiers and the suffering of Iraqis under sanc-

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tions. Both were a direct result of the inconclusive end to the first Gulf war.

Still, the achievements of the elder Bush far outweigh the failures. The smooth and peaceful dissolution of the Soviet empire began, Saddam was stopped, and Arabia was saved. But then came the second, radically different experiment. For the balance of the 1990's, for reasons having nothing to do with foreign policy, realism was abruptly replaced by the classic liberal internationalism of the Clinton administration.

It is hard to be charitable in assessing the record. Liberal internationalism's one major achievement in those years—saving the Muslims in the Balkans and creating conditions for their possible peaceful integration into Europe—was achieved, ironically, in defiance of its own major principle. It lacked what liberal internationalists incessantly claim is the sine qua non of legitimacy: the approval of the UN Security Council.

Otherwise, the period between 1993 and 2001 was a waste, eight years of sleepwalking, of the absurd pursuit of one treaty more useless than the last, while the rising threat—Islamic terrorism—was treated as a problem of law enforcement. Perhaps the most symbolic moment occurred at the residence of the U.S. ambassador to France in October 2000, after Yasir Arafat had rejected Israel's peace offer at Camp David and instead launched his bloody second *intifada*. In Paris for another round of talks, Arafat abruptly broke off negotiations and was leaving the residence when Secretary of State Madeleine Albright ran after him, chasing him in her heels on the cobblestone courtyard to induce him, to cajole him, into signing yet another worthless piece of paper.

Leon Trotsky is said to have remarked of the New York intellectual Dwight Macdonald, "Everyone has a right to be stupid, but Comrade Macdonald abuses the privilege." During its seven-and-a-half year Oslo folly, the Clinton administration abused the privilege consistently.

THEN CAME another radical change. By a fluke or a miracle, depending on your point of view, because of the confusion of a few disoriented voters in Palm Beach, Florida, this has been the decade of neoconservatism. Bismarck once said that God looks after fools, drunkards, children, and the United States of America. Given the 2000 presidential election, it is clear that He works in very mysterious ways.

In place of realism or liberal internationalism, the last four-and-a-half years have seen an unashamed assertion and deployment of American power, a resort to unilateralism when necessary, and a willingness to preempt threats before they emerge. Most importantly, the second Bush administration has explicitly declared the spread of freedom to be the central principle of American foreign policy. Bush's second inaugural address last January was the most dramatic and expansive expression of this principle. A few weeks later, at the National Defense University, the President offered its most succinct formulation: "The defense of freedom requires the advance of freedom."

The remarkable fact that the Bush Doctrine is, essentially, a synonym for neoconservative foreign policy marks neoconservatism's own transition from a position of dissidence, which it occupied during the first Bush administration and the Clinton years, to governance. Neoconservative foreign policy, one might say, has reached maturity. That is not only a portentous development, requiring some rethinking of principles and practice, but a rather unexpected one.

It is unexpected because, only a year ago, neoconservative foreign policy was being consigned to the ash heap of history. In the spring and summer of 2004, in the midst of increasing difficulties in Iraq, it was very widely believed that neoconservative policies had been run to the ground, that the administration that had purveyed them would soon be thrown out of office, and that internecine recriminations were about to begin over who lost the war on terror, the war in Iraq, and indeed the reins of American foreign policy. One prominent columnist, speaking for the conventional wisdom of the moment, called the Bush project in Iraq "a childish fantasy." And this, from a friend of neoconservatism.

As for the liberals who had come on board the project of liberating Iraq, they took its perceived foundering as an opportunity to engage in a mass jumping of ship. Some justified their abandonment of the Bush Doctrine on the grounds that it was *they* who had been betrayed—by an administration whose incompetence, mendacity, political opportunism, and various other crimes had ruined a policy that would already have been crowned with success if only they had been in charge of postwar Iraq, calibrating brilliantly precise troop levels, calculating to three decimal places the required degree of de-Baathification, and overseeing just about every other operational detail according to the dictates of their own tactical genius.

Other liberals donned the guise of realists, who by the summer of 2004 were back in fashion. At the

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height of this new vogue, just before the November election, even John Kerry's advisers, noting that the liberal-internationalist critique of the war (namely, that it lacked international support and legitimacy) was not exactly winning converts, settled instead on a "realist" line of attack. From then on, Iraq would be known as the "wrong war in the wrong place at the wrong time," which, translated, meant that we should be chasing terrorists cave-to-cave in Afghanistan rather than pursuing an ideological crusade in the Middle East.

If you add to this mix the classical realists, from Brent Scowcroft to Dimitri Simes, who had opposed the entire project from the beginning and were now penning their I-told-you-so's, there seemed scarcely anyone left on board the neoconservative ship. But the most interesting about-face was that of some professed neoconservatives themselves. Among these, the most prominent was Francis Fukuyama, whose lead article in the summer 2004 *National Interest* was a "realist" attack on the entire ideological underpinnings of the Iraq war and the liberationist idea. The article's very title, "The Neoconservative Moment," made the mocking suggestion, also very much in vogue, that neoconservative foreign policy was finished, that its moment had come and gone, that it had been done in by Iraq, by its own overweening arrogance, and by its blindness to the realist wisdom that failure in Iraq was, as Fukuyama put it, "predictable in advance."

As it happens, Fukuyama had neglected to make that prediction in advance; at the time of the war and during the months of debate preceding it, he had been silent. Moreover, from the perspective of today, even his retroactive prediction in summer 2004 of inevitable and catastrophic failure in Iraq appears doubtful, to say the least. Getting a retroactive prediction wrong is quite an achievement, but it tells you much about the intellectual climate just a year ago.

Today, there is no euphoria regarding the Iraq project, but sobriety has replaced panic. Things have changed, and what changed them was four elections: two in the West, and two in the Middle East. First came the reelection in Australia of John Howard, a firm ally of the administration. This presaged the reelection of George Bush, which reaffirmed to the world America's staying power, gave popular legitimacy to the Bush Doctrine, and established a clear mandate to continue the democratic project. The refusal of the American people last November to turn out a President who, rejecting an "exit strategy," pledged instead to remain until Iraqi self-governance had been secured, was a seminal moment.

The other two elections took place in the areas of our exertion: first the Afghan elections, scandalously underplayed by the American media, then the Iraqi elections, impossible to underplay even by the American media. The latter were a historical hinge point. After a string of other important steps in Iraq that had been confidently dismissed as impossible and certainly impossible to do on time—the writing of an interim constitution, the transfer of power to an interim Iraqi government—came the greatest impossibility of all: free elections as scheduled. The overwhelming popular turnout, in what was essentially a referendum on the insurgency and on the democratic idea, sent a clearcut message. Those who had said that the Iraqis, like Arabs in general, had no particular interest in self-government were wrong—as were those who claimed that the insurgency was a nationalist, anti-imperialist, and widely popular movement.

This is hardly to say that things have not remained difficult in Iraq. The insurgency is still raging. It has the capacity to kill, to instill fear, and perhaps ultimately to destabilize the elected government. What the election did do, however, was to confirm what was already suggested by the insurgency's clear lack of any political program, any political wing, any ideology, indeed even any pretense of competing for hearts and minds. The election exposed the insurgency as an alliance of Baathist nihilism and atavistic jihadism, neither of which has a large constituency in Iraq.

And that is hardly all. The elections newly empowered fully 80 percent of the Iraqi population—the Kurds and the Shiites—and created an indigenous representative leadership with a life-and-death stake in defeating the insurgency. By giving that 80 percent the political and institutional means to build the necessary forces, the elections infinitely improved the chances that a stable, multiethnic, democratic Iraq can emerge, despite the current mayhem. As Fouad Ajami wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* on May 16, upon returning from a visit to the region:

> The insurgents will do what they are good at. But no one really believes that those dispensers of death can turn back the clock. . . . By a twist of fate, the one Arab country that had seemed ever marked for brutality and sorrow now stands poised on the frontier of a new political world.

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The elections' effect on the wider Arab world was likewise both immediate and profound. Millions of Arabs watched on television as Iraqis exercised their political rights, and were moved to ask the obvious question: why are Iraqis the only Arabs voting in free elections—and doing so, moreover, under American aegis and protection? The rest is so well known as barely to merit repeating. The Beirut spring. Syria's withdrawal from Lebanon. Open demonstrations and the beginnings of political competition in Egypt. Women's suffrage in Kuwait. Small but significant steps toward democratization in the Gulf. Bashar Assad's declared intent to legalize political parties in Syria, purge the ruling Baath party, sponsor free municipal elections in 2007, and move toward a market economy.*

Ajami has called this (in the title of a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*) the "Autumn of the Autocrats." Not the winter—nothing is certain, and we know of many democratizing movements in the past that were successfully put down. There are too many entrenched dictatorships and kleptocracies in the region to declare anything won. What we *can* declare, with certainty, is the falsity of those confident assurances before the Iraq war, during the Iraq war, and after the Iraq war that this project was inevitably doomed to failure because we do not know how to "do" democracy, and they do not know how to receive it.

In Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and elsewhere in the Arab world, the forces of democratic liberalization have emerged on the political stage in a way that was unimaginable just two years ago. They have been energized and emboldened by the Iraqi example and by American resolve. Until now, it was widely assumed that the only alternative to pan-Arabist autocracy, to the Nassers and the Saddams, was Islamism. We now know, from Iraq and Lebanon, that there is another possibility, and that America has given it life. As the Lebanese Druze leader Walid Jumblatt, hardly a noted friend of the Bush Doctrine, put it in late February in an interview with David Ignatius of the *Washington Post*:

> It's strange for me to say it, but this process of change has started because of the American invasion of Iraq. I was cynical about Iraq. But when I saw the Iraqi people voting three weeks ago, 8 million of them, it was the start of a new Arab world. The Syrian people, the Egyptian people, all say that something is changing. The Berlin Wall has fallen. We can see it.

The Iraqi elections vindicated the two central propositions of the Bush Doctrine. First, that the desire for freedom is indeed universal and not the private preserve of Westerners. Second, that America is genuinely committed to democracy in and of itself. Contrary to the cynics, whether Arab, European, or American, the U.S. did not go into Iraq for oil or hegemony but for liberation—a truth that on January 30 even al Jazeera had to televise. Arabs in particular had had sound historical reason to doubt American sincerity: six decades of U.S. support for Arab dictators, a cynical "realism" that began with FDR's deal with the House of Saud and reached its apogee with the 1991 betrayal of the anti-Saddam uprising that the elder Bush had encouraged in Iraq. Today, however, they see a different Bush and a different doctrine.

THE IRAQI elections had one final effect. They so acutely embarrassed foreign critics, especially in Europe, that we began to see a rash of headlines asking the rhetorical question: Was Bush Right? The answer to that is: yes, so far. The democratic project has been launched, against the critics and against the odds. That in itself is an immense historical achievement. But success will require maturation—a neoconservatism of discrimination and restraint, prepared to examine both its principles and its practice in shaping a truly governing philosophy.

In a lecture at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) last year, I tried to draw a distinction between a more expansive and a more restrictive neoconservative foreign policy. I called the two types, respectively, democratic globalism and democratic realism.†

The chief spokesman for democratic globalism is the President himself, and his second inaugural address is its ur-text. What is most breathtaking about it is not what most people found shocking—his announced goal of abolishing tyranny throughout the world. Granted, that is rather cosmic-sounding, but it is only an expression of direction and hope for, well, the end of time. What is most expansive is the pledge that America will stand with dissidents throughout the world, wherever they are.

This sort of talk immediately opens itself up to the accusation of disingenuousness and hypocrisy.

* Not that Assad is likely to do any of this, but the fact that he must pretend to be doing it shows the astonishing reach of the Bush Doctrine to date. See Anthony Shadid, "Syria Heralds Reforms, But Many Have Doubts," *Washington Post*, May 18, 2005.

† The text of my remarks, given as the 2004 Irving Kristol Lecture and published as an AEI monograph titled "Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World," can also be found at www.aei.org.

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After all, the United States retains cozy relations with autocracies of various stripes, most notably Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Russia. Besides, if we place ourselves on the side of all dissidents everywhere, must we not declare our solidarity not only with democrats but with Islamist dissidents sitting in Pakistani, Egyptian, Saudi, and Russian jails?

But we do not act this way, and we need not. The question of alliances with dictators, of deals with the devil, can be approached openly, forthrightly, and without any need for defensiveness. The principle is that we cannot democratize the world overnight and, therefore, if we are sincere about the democratic project, we must proceed sequentially. Nor, out of a false equivalence, need we abandon democratic reformers in these autocracies. On the contrary, we have a duty to support them, even as we have a perfect moral right to distinguish between democrats on the one hand and totalitarians or jihadists on the other.

In the absence of omnipotence, one must deal with the lesser of two evils. That means postponing radically destabilizing actions in places where the support of the current non-democratic regime is needed against a larger existential threat to the free world. There is no need to apologize for that. In World War II we allied ourselves with Stalin against Hitler. (As Churchill said shortly after the German invasion of the USSR: "If Hitler invaded hell I would make at least a favorable reference to the devil in the House of Commons.") This was a necessary alliance, and a temporary one: when we were done with Hitler, we turned our attention to Stalin and his successors.

During the subsequent war, the cold war, we again made alliances with the devil, in the form of a variety of right-wing dictators, in order to fight the greater evil. Here, again, the partnership was necessary and temporary. Our deals with right-wing dictatorships were contingent upon their usefulness and upon the status of the ongoing struggle. Once again we were true to our word. Whenever we could, and particularly as we approached victory in the larger war, we dispensed with those alliances.

Consider two cases of useful but temporary allies against Communism: Augusto Pinochet in Chile and Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines. We proved our bona fides in both of these cases when, as Moscow weakened and the existential threat to the free world receded, we worked to bring down both dictators. In 1986, we openly and decisively supported the Aquino revolution that deposed and exiled Marcos, and later in the 80's we pressed very hard for free elections in Chile that Pinochet lost, paving the way for the return of democracy.

Alliances with dictatorships were justified in the war against fascism and the cold war, and they are justified now in the successor existential struggle, the war against Arab/Islamic radicalism. This is not just theory. It has practical implications. For nothing is more practical than the question: after Afghanistan, after Iraq, what?

The answer is, first Lebanon, then Syria. Lebanon is next because it is so obviously ready for democracy, having practiced a form of it for 30 years after decolonization. Its sophistication and political culture make it ripe for transformation, as the massive pro-democracy demonstrations have shown.

Then comes Syria, both because of its vulnerability—the Lebanon withdrawal has gravely weakened Assad—and because of its strategic importance. A critical island of recalcitrance in a liberalizing region stretching from the Mediterranean to the Iranian border, Syria has tried to destabilize all of its neighbors: Turkey, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, and now, most obviously and bloodily, the new Iraq. Serious, prolonged, ruthless pressure on the Assad regime would yield enormous geopolitical advantage in democratizing, and thus pacifying, the entire Levant.

Some conservatives (and many liberals) have proposed instead that we be true to the universalist language of the President's second inaugural address and go after the three principal Islamic autocracies: Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.* Not so fast, and not so hard. Autocracies they are, and in many respects nasty ones. But doing this would be a mistake.

In Egypt, we certainly have liberal resources that should be supported and encouraged. But, keeping in mind the Algerian experience, we should be wary of bringing down the whole house of cards and thereby derailing any progress from authoritarianism to liberal democracy. Saudi Arabia has a Byzantine culture, and an equally Byzantine method of governance, which must be delicately reformed short of overthrow. And Pakistan, which has great potential for democracy, is simply too critical as a military ally in the war on al Qaeda to risk anything right now. Pervez Musharraf is no bastard; but even if he were, he is ours. We should

* For a nuanced presentation of the case, see Victor Davis Hanson, "The Bush Doctrine's Next Test," in the May Commentary.

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be encouraging the evolution of democracy in all of these countries, but relentless and ruthless means—of the kind we employed in Afghanistan and Iraq and should, perhaps short of direct military invention, be employing in Syria—are better applied to enemies, not friends.

What is interesting is that the Bush administration, in practice, is proceeding precisely along these lines. It pushes on Mubarak, but gently. It moves even more gingerly with Saudi Arabia, fearing what may emerge in the short term if the royal kleptocracy is deposed. And, because Pakistan is so central to the war on terror, it disturbs not a hair on the head of Musharraf.

In short, the Bush administration—if you like, neoconservatism in power—has been far more inclined to pursue democratic realism and to consign democratic globalism to the realm of aspiration. This kind of prudent circumspection is, in fact, a practical necessity for governing in the real world. We should, for example, be doing everything in our power, both overtly and covertly, to encourage a democratic revolution in Iran, a deeply hostile and dangerous state, even while trying carefully to manage democratic evolution in places like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. Indeed, the behavior of the Bush administration implies that in practice, the distinction between democratic realism and democratic globalism may collapse, because globalism is simply not sustainable.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT sign of the maturing of neoconservative foreign policy is that it is no longer tethered to its own ideological history and paternity. The current practitioners of neoconservative foreign policy are George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, and Donald Rumsfeld. They have no history in the movement, and before 9/11 had little affinity to or affiliation with it.

The fathers of neoconservatism are former liberals or leftists. Today, its chief proponents, to judge by *their* history, are former realists. Rice, for example, was a disciple of Brent Scowcroft; Cheney served as Secretary of Defense in the first Bush administration. September 11 changed all of that. It changed the world, and changed our understanding of the world. As neoconservatism seemed to offer the most plausible explanation of the new reality and the most compelling and active response to it, many realists were brought to acknowledge the poverty of realism—not just the futility but the danger of a foreign policy centered on the illusion of stability and equilibrium. These realists, newly mugged by reality, have given weight to neoconservatism, making it more diverse and, given the newcomers' past experience, more mature.

What neoconservatives have long been advocating is now being articulated and practiced at the highest levels of government by a war cabinet composed of individuals who, coming from a very different place, have joined and reshaped the neoconservative camp and are carrying the neoconservative idea throughout the world. As a result, the vast right-wing conspiracy has grown even more vast than liberals could imagine. And even as the tent has enlarged, the great schisms and splits in conservative foreign policy—so widely predicted just a year ago, so eagerly sought and amplified by outside analysts—have not occurred. Indeed, differences have, if anything, narrowed.

This is not party discipline. It is compromise with reality, and convergence toward the middle. Above all, it is the maturation of a governing ideology whose time has come.

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Columbia and the Academic Intifada

Efraim Karsh

SINCE ITS birth in 1948, Israel has faced down numerous attempts to destroy it or undercut its right to exist. War, terrorism, economic and diplomatic ostracism, UN resolutions, media vilification, not to mention the spread of anti-Semitic libel, have all taken their toll. Recently a new, seemingly more confined but no less difficult challenge has been added: an effort to harness the perceived moral and intellectual force of professional scholars in the campaign to de-legitimize the Jewish state.

I am not just speaking of the anti-Israel and anti-Jewish campaign that erupted on Western campuses simultaneously with the launch of the Palestinian terror war in September 2000, and that intensified as Israel took steps to contain it. To this has been added classroom denigration of the state of Israel and its supporters, and even open advocacy of its destruction.

Last April's decision by Britain's 48,000-strong Association of University Teachers (AUT) to boycott Haifa and Bar-Ilan universities is the most obvious example of this latter phenomenon. The decision, subsequently rescinded in the face of an international outcry, had nothing to do with scholarly considerations: Israel is the only Middle Eastern country where academics enjoy complete and unrestricted freedom of expression. Nor did it reflect an honest sense of solidarity with the Palestinian universities of the West Bank and Gaza, which for the past decade have been under the control not of Israel but of the Palestinian Authority (PA). Rather, the boycott was a frank attempt to single out Israel as a pariah nation, to declare its *existence* illegitimate. As the Haifa academic Ilan Pappe, whose (false) claim of persecution by his university provided the pretext for the boycott, pleaded with the AUT on the eve of its resolution:

> I appeal to you today to be part of a historical movement and moment that may bring an end to more than a century of colonization, occupation, and dispossession of Palestinians. . . . The message that will be directed specifically against those academic institutes which have been particularly culpable in sustaining the oppression since 1948 and the occupation since 1967 can be a start for a successful campaign for peace (as similar acts at the time had activated the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa).

In other words, Israeli scholars were to be ostracized not for any supposed repression of academic freedom but for their contribution to the creation and prosperity of the state of Israel, a racist, colonialist implant in the Middle East as worthy of extirpation as the former apartheid regime of South Africa. With this as the boycott's goal, small won-

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der that one of its prime movers, Sue Blackwell of Birmingham University, posted a picture on the web of herself wrapped in the Palestinian flag and headlined "Victory for the Academic Intifada."

Still, however despicable such efforts by open Israel-haters, most of whom claim no knowledge of Middle Eastern affairs, it pales in comparison with a far more insidious development in the field of Middle East studies itself, the training ground of future scholars, opinion-makers, and policy experts. Here the textbook example is the department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures (MEALAC) at Columbia University in New York, whose faculty members have been plausibly accused by students of abusing their positions in order to vilify Israel, to promote anti-Zionism, and to stifle free discussion of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

IN THE fall of 2004, the David Project, a Boston-based advocacy group, produced a video titled *Columbia Unbecoming*. In it, various students recounted their personal experiences of classroom bias and intimidation. Three professors came in for particular criticism.

Hamid Dabashi, the head of MEALAC, was accused of, among other things, canceling classes to attend, and to permit his students to attend, a pro-Palestinian rally on campus that featured a call for Israel's destruction. George Saliba, who teaches Arabic and Islamic science, allegedly told a Jewish student in a private discussion that she had no claim to the land of Israel or any right to an opinion on the Israel-Palestinian question because, unlike his brown-eyed self, "You have green eyes; you're not a Semite." On another occasion Saliba reprimanded a student who had questioned his habitual substitution of the term Palestine for Israel, as if to deny the existence of the Jewish state: "Oh, so that's the ax that you have to grind? Why Israel is being called Palestine in my class? What about the plight of the Palestinians? Why isn't that what you are talking to me about?"

Students were even more critical of Joseph Massad, a protégé of the late Edward Said. Among the more serious accusations were Massad's likening of Jews to Nazis and his disparagement of Israel as a racist state. Reportedly, Massad taunted one student, who had served in the Israeli army, "How many Palestinians have you killed?," and informed another that he would not "have anybody here deny Israeli atrocities." One student recounted Massad's telling his class, "The Palestinian is the new Jew, and the Jew is the new Nazi."

In December, faced with growing public indignation, Columbia's president, Lee H. Bollinger, grudgingly announced the appointment of a committee to review student complaints. The committee's composition gave a clear signal of Bollinger's own disposition. Three of the five members were known critics of Israel, and two of these three had signed a petition calling on Columbia to divest its holdings from companies selling arms and military hardware to Israel. (An *anti*-divestment petition had also attracted wide support on campus, but none of the five had signed it.) Another member had served as Massad's dissertation adviser, and shortly before being appointed to the committee had signed a letter decrying press reports about MEALAC's prejudice as "the latest salvo against academic freedom at Columbia."*

In its report, released at the end of March, the committee predictably circumvented the core issue. Focusing on "significant deficiencies in the university's grievance and advising procedures," it ruled that Massad had acted inappropriately by responding "heatedly" to "a question that he understood to countenance Israeli conduct of which he disapproved," while consigning to "a challenging gray zone" his taunt about the number of Palestinians a student had supposedly killed. At the same time, the panel had nothing but praise for "Massad's dedication to, and respectful attitude toward, his students" and for his "willingness . . . to permit anyone who wished to do so to comment or raise a question during his lectures." Indeed, so open-minded was Massad in the committee's estimation that his "pedagogical strategy" actually "allowed a small but vociferous group"—presumably, pro-Israel students—"to disrupt lectures by their incessant questions and comments."

Adding insult to whitewash, the committee found "no evidence of any statements made by the faculty that could reasonably be construed as anti-Semitic." Above all, it scanted the majority of the complaints, which centered on none of these matters but rather (as the committee itself noted) on "what a number of students perceived as bias in the content of particular courses" as well as on charges that "particular professors had an inadequate grasp of the material they taught and that they purveyed inaccurate information."

All this was too much even for the *New York Times*, which had been overtly sympathetic to the Columbia faculty throughout the crisis. "Most student complaints," it now editorialized correctly, "were not really about intimidation, but about al-

* The best and most dogged reporting on the Columbia affair was done by Jacob Gershman of the *New York Sun*.

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legations of stridently pro-Palestinian, anti-Israeli bias on the part of several professors." Since the committee had failed, in the words of the *Times*, "to examine the quality and fairness of teaching," the university was still left with the need "to follow up on complaints about politicized courses and a lack of scholarly rigor."

THIS AT least cuts to the heart of the matter. The issue is not whether professors should treat their students with due respect, as indeed they should, but whether they should be permitted, under the guise of academic freedom, to pass off personal bias and open political partisanship as scholarly fact. That the committee avoided this issue is hardly a surprise. For when it comes to honest scholarship, there can be no question of where George Saliba, Joseph Massad, and Hamid Dabashi stand.

Massad, for example, who emphatically dismissed the charges against him as part of a coordinated hate campaign by Israel and its right-wing supporters in America, recently published a series of articles in the English-language edition of the prominent Egyptian paper *al-Ahram*. There he repeatedly derided Zionism as a form of European imperialism and Israel as "a racist Jewish state" (or "a racist settler colony"), openly advocating its replacement "by a secular democratic bi-national state"—the PLO's shorthand slogan since the late 1960's for a Middle East without Israel. Turning the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on its head, Massad claimed that "Jewish colonists were part of the British colonial death squads that murdered Palestinian revolutionaries between 1936 and 1939 while Hitler unleashed *Kristallnacht* against German Jews." Thus, he concluded, "the ultimate achievement of Israel" was the "transformation of the Jew into the anti-Semite, and the Palestinian into the Jew."

Hamid Dabashi echoed Massad's anger at the "malicious defamation of my department with no basis in truth" (as he wrote to the *Spectator*, Columbia's student paper). In his own public statements and writings, however, Dabashi has if anything outdone Massad in concocting a scenario of the Middle East in which Israel not only has no legitimate place but can hardly be said to exist, except as an unnamed Dark Force.

"I flew to Palestine and landed in Ben-Gurion checkpoint," Dabashi wrote of a brief visit in February 2004 "to four Palestinian cities": Gaza City, Ramallah, Nazareth, and Jerusalem (the last two of which are, at recent report, still in Israel). During his weeklong stay in the country that "they call 'Israel,'" the only non-Arab civilians he noted were knots of ultra-Orthodox Jews "rushing to some unspecified destination." Nowhere to be seen in the streets of Jerusalem, evidently, were the Jewish Israelis—men, women, and children—who constitute the vast majority of the country's population. Instead, he found the streets inhabited by heavily armed soldiers "with very long machine guns hanging from their necks," as befits "a military base for the rising predatory empire of the United States."

Back at the Ben-Gurion "checkpoint" on his return flight to New York, Dabashi was struck by an airport scene resembling something out of the pages of Hannah Arendt's reflections on the "banality of evil." Before him was not a departure lounge but

> a fully fortified barrack, with its battalion of security forces treating all the transient inmates with equal banality. It was not just colored Muslims like me that they treated like hazardous chemicals. It was everyone. "One," as in our quintessential humanity, melted in this fearful furnace into a nullity beyond human recognition.

But his torture was not over; once on line to board the aircraft, Dabashi was forced to contemplate with horror "a young couple and their five children, all boys and all with yarmulkes on their heads," the mother pregnant, the father "murmuring something under his breath," the children "each eating a McDonald's hamburger. I presume McDonald's makes kosher hamburger. I was quite nauseous."

Only after having finally escaped from this "massive machinery of death and destruction" to the safety of Manhattan did Dabashi permit himself a detached scholarly meditation on the origins of so "miasmatic [a] mutation of human soul into a subterranean mixture of vile and violence." Where could it have come from? His answer:

> Half a century of systematic maiming and murdering of another people has left its deep marks on the faces of these people. . . . A subsumed militarism, a systemic mendacity with an ingrained violence constitutional to the very fusion of its fabric, has penetrated the deepest corners of what these people have to call their "soul." No people can perpetrate what these people and their parents and grandparents have perpetrated on Palestinians and remain immune to the cruelty of their own deeds.

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LIKE MASSAD, Dabashi found a home for his lucubrations in *al-Ahram*, a paper that itself regularly features anti-Semitic articles and cartoons. His thoughts on the nature and history of Israeli society tell much about the tenor of the academic department he had the privilege of heading at one of the world's great universities. They also prompt a question of their own: where do such ranting constructions of reality have *their* origin?

A lengthy historical treatise could be written in answer to that question, but the first place to look is at the career and writings of Edward Said, the patron saint of Middle Eastern studies in its current incarnation. Like Dabashi, Massad, and many others, Said, who died in 2003, made a specialty of appropriating the experience of the Jews as his own, even while belittling Jewish collective identity and savaging the Jewish state.

"I don't find the idea of a Jewish state terribly interesting," Said told an interviewer for the Israeli paper *Ha'aretz* in August 2000. "I wouldn't want it for myself. Even if I were a Jew. I'd fight against it. And it won't last. . . . Take my word for it. . . . It won't even be remembered." Making his own vision of the future explicit, he added: "[T]he Jews are a minority everywhere. A Jewish minority can survive [in Arab Palestine] the way other minorities in the Arab world survived."

In his published work, Said discounted altogether the historic Jewish attachment to Palestine and misrepresented Israel's creation and subsequent struggle for survival as a predatory colonialist endeavor to occupy another people's land and to dispossess the indigenous population. Missing from his account were such inconvenient facts as the Arabs' outspoken commitment to the destruction of the Jewish national cause, the sustained and repeated Arab efforts to achieve that end from the early 1920's onward, and the no less sustained efforts of the Jews at peaceful coexistence. In his account, Zionism emerged instead as an offshoot of European imperialism at its most rapacious. As for the Palestinian Arabs, they were Zionism's hapless victims, "whose main sin [was] that they happened to be there, in Israel's way."

Like his protégé Joseph Massad, Said invoked the Holocaust only in order to deny the reality of Jewish identity and history. "I am one of the few Arabs who have written about the Holocaust," he boasted to *Ha'aretz*. "I've been to Buchenwald and Dachau and other death camps, and I see the connection." But his acknowledgement of the Nazi murder of European Jews was merely a tactical ploy. As he candidly explained, "by recognizing the Holocaust for the genocidal madness that it was, we can then demand from Israelis and Jews the right to link the Holocaust to Zionist injustices toward the Palestinians."

Said spared no effort at hammering home that linkage. In the mid-1980's, for example, he compared the notion of Jewish statehood with Nazi Germany's "organized [program of] discrimination or persecution." "I do not want to press the analogy too far," he wrote in 2002, on the second anniversary of Arafat's terror war, "but it is true to say that Palestinians under Israeli occupation today are as powerless as Jews were in the 1940's."

A strange assessment on the anniversary of a Palestinian war that had already resulted in the bloody murder of some 700 Israelis and the wounding of thousands more in daily terror attacks. But then, Said was also quick to dismiss Palestinian terrorism itself as a figment of Israel's imagination, "invented so that its own neuroses can be inscribed on the bodies of Palestinians." Unhindered by his lack of any professional knowledge of Israeli society or politics, he indicted Israel as "a country whose soul has been captured by a mania for punishing the weak, a democracy that faithfully mirrors the psychopathic mentality of its ruler, General Sharon, whose sole idea—if that is the right word for it—is to kill, reduce, maim, drive away Palestinians until 'they break.'"

ALTHOUGH HE mobilized the machinery of postmodernist "discourse" to construct his portrait of Israeli reality, Said was no more original in his choice of rhetoric than his acolytes after him. The repudiation of Jewish nationalism has, in fact, been a staple of Arab propaganda ever since the early 1920's, was institutionalized in the PLO Covenant of 1964, and received international codification in the UN's 1975 resolution declaring Zionism "a form of racism and racial discrimination." Almost as antique is the equation of Zionism with Nazism and colonialism. Within a year of its creation in 1964, the PLO had produced a short pamphlet, titled *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine*, foreshadowing Said's "postcolonialist" arguments.

Take, for example, the pamphlet's description of the birth of Zionism:

> The frenzied "scramble for Africa" of the 1880's stimulated the beginnings of Zionist colonization in Palestine. As European fortune-hunters, prospective settlers, and empire-builders raced for Africa, Zionist settlers and would-be state-builders rushed for Palestine.

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Here is the same idea as rendered in Said's *The Question of Palestine* (1980):

> Zionism . . . coincided with the period of unparalleled European territorial acquisition in Africa and Asia, and it was as part of this general movement of acquisition and occupation that Zionism was launched initially by Theodor Herzl.

Or consider the pamphlet's explanation of the main difference between Zionism and 19th-century European colonialism:

> Unlike European colonization elsewhere, . . . Zionist colonization of Palestine was essentially incompatible with the continued existence of the "native population" in the coveted country.

And here is Said:

> Zionism was a colonial vision unlike that of most other 19th-century European powers, for whom the natives of outlying territories were *included* [emphasis in original] in the redemptive *mission civilisatrice*.

And the Jewish state's ultimate objectives? According to the pamphlet, "the Zionist concept of the 'final solution' to the 'Arab problem' in Palestine, and the Nazi concept of the 'final solution' to the 'Jewish problem' in Germany, consisted essentially of the same basic ingredient: the elimination of the unwanted human element in question." Said avoids such highly charged terminology, but his gist is unmistakably the same:

> There is, of course, the charge made by National Socialism, as codified in the Nuremberg Laws, that Jews were foreign, and therefore expendable. . . . Then there is the almost too perfect literalization that is given the binary opposition Jew-versus-non-European in the climatic chapter of the unfolding narrative of Zionist settlement in Palestine.

LYING PROPAGANDA is perhaps to be expected from a revolutionary organization committed to eliminating by violence a longstanding member of the United Nations. Its introduction into the college classroom is another matter. But it is here that Said's influence has been unrivaled, and well beyond the confines of Columbia, his own institution. Catapulted to international stardom by his 1978 book *Orientalism*, a blistering attack on supposed Western perceptions of the Middle East and Islam, Said used his celebrity status to blur, if not to erase altogether, the dividing line between political propaganda and academic scholarship. He was quickly followed by legions of disciples, many of whom would make their careers in departments of Middle East studies by consciously patterning themselves on this "Salah al-Din [Saladin] of our reasoning with mad adversaries," to quote Dabashi's perfervid eulogy of his intellectual hero.

And herein lies the crucial importance of the Columbia case. Far from being an exception, its classroom teaching is emblematic of the pervasive prejudice that has afflicted the field of modern Middle Eastern studies for quite some time.*

That prejudice is fueled in equal parts by money and ideas. We have seen where some of the leading ideas come from. The money comes from oil-rich Arab countries that have created endowed chairs or research centers over which they exercise lasting control. Only last year, Harvard was forced to return a $2.5-million donation from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for the creation of a chair named after the UAE's ruler, Sheik Zaid ibn Sultan, when it was revealed (again by student initiative) that an Arab think tank connected with Zaid was promulgating anti-American and anti-Semitic views. Columbia, by contrast, went out of its way to hide the UAE's $200,000 contribution to a newly endowed chair in modern Arab studies and literature, and then insisted on retaining the money once the link had been exposed. Fittingly, the chair is named for Edward Said.

It is difficult to overstate the tenacity of the resulting infestation of Arab dogmatism in Middle East studies as a field. Over the last two decades, one would be hard-pressed to find books on the Arab-Israeli conflict issuing from Middle East-studies departments that present the Jewish state in a dispassionate, let alone a positive, light, and hardly any such items appear on course reading lists. Thus, at Columbia, the syllabus for Joseph Massad's fall 2004 survey course on the Middle East included, in addition to readings from the canonical Edward Said and the subtler Orientalist Albert Hourani, a single work on Israel: a three-decades-old screed by the French Marxist historian of Islam, Maxime Rodinson, whose title, *Israel, a Colonial-Settler State?*, says it all. Scholars daring to defy the general stigmatization of Israel have been attacked and marginalized.

Above all, the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), the largest and most influential professional body for the study of the region, whose 2,600-plus members inhabit departments of Mid-

* For chapter and verse, see Martin Kramer, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America* (2002).

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dle East studies throughout the world, has become a hotbed of anti-Israel invective. Past presidents of the association like Joel Beinin of Stanford and Rashid Khalidi of Columbia—the latter holds the Edward Said chair—have, in one form or another, publicly advocated the destruction of Israel as a state. Joseph Massad won MESA's prize for the outstanding Ph.D. dissertation in the field, and the resulting book was warmly reviewed by three past MESA presidents, not to mention by Said himself.

Given these circumstances, it was only natural for a group of prominent MESA members to send a letter to Columbia's president in support of the beleaguered MEALAC staff, or for the association's president-elect, Juan Cole of Michigan, to rush to the aid of Massad—the victim, as Cole put it, of "a concerted campaign" by "the American Likud." "In parlous times like the post-9/11 environment," Cole stormed, "demagogues grow powerful and American values are endangered. Massad is the canary in the mineshaft of American democracy."

Even if the Columbia leadership were to do the decent thing, by acknowledging the ongoing bigotry of its professors and by disciplining the offenders, such action would only address the symptoms and not the causes of the pervasive anti-Israel and anti-Jewish bias in the field of modern Middle East studies. Not only is the academic *intifada* against the Jewish state thriving, the reigning terms of discussion it has introduced for understanding Middle Eastern reality have become perfectly normal, perfectly conventional, perfectly accepted in academic discourse. It will take more than a single student protest to undo the rot that has settled into the study of the Middle East and that is now quite comfortably at home in Western universities.

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Class Struggle in America?

Bruce Bartlett

In recent years, the *New York Times* has suffered many blows to its status and reputation. But when it chooses to employ its vast resources toward a specific goal, it can still influence the national discussion on any given issue. In May, the *Times* undertook to revive the issue of class in America by launching "Class Matters"—a huge, multipart series, more than a year in the making, involving a large team of reporters, specially commissioned polling, and an interactive website.

The gist of the series, conveyed in the very first installment, is that "class is still a powerful force in American life"—so powerful that, in the words of the *Times*, "it has come to play a greater, not lesser, role," accounting not only for individuals' success or failure in school but for the increasing isolation of the rich from the rest of American society.

This is hardly a new theme for the *Times*. To the contrary, one can depend on the paper to report dutifully every new study or statistic purporting to show that the rich have gotten richer in America while the poor have become poorer. Evidence in support of this proposition is, in the *Times*'s view, overwhelming; the only puzzle has been the propensity of voters to endorse and bolster this trend by electing Republicans to national office who are determined to cut the taxes of the rich.

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One purported answer to that puzzle can be found in Thomas Frank's *What's the Matter With Kansas?*, a recent, much-reviewed book that focuses on the many rural and working-class Americans, once a reliable constituency of the Democratic party, who have developed the political tic that so troubles the editors of the *Times*. According to Frank, what causes such voters to ignore their own economic self-interest, which clearly lies with liberals and Democrats, is their fundamentally conservative position on social issues, from the excesses of Hollywood to abortion-on-demand. This trumps their economic concerns, pushing them into the Republican column.

The *Times* appears dissatisfied with this interpretation. Instead, it has set out to find a more purely economic explanation for why so many poor and working-class Americans betray their own interests when they enter the voting booth. "Class Matters" is the result.

Before taking up the claims advanced in this series, it is worth glancing back at the rich history of the *Times*'s interest in income inequality. A relevant benchmark is the 1980's, when the paper drew a clear connection between the Reagan tax cuts enacted earlier in the decade and, to the *Times*, the alarming increase in the share of household income subsequently going to those at the top of the distribution scale.

At first glance, the link drawn by the *Times*

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seemed plausible enough. In 1981, according to the Census Bureau, the lowest quintile (20 percent) of households was garnering 4.2 percent of total income and the highest quintile's share stood at 43.8 percent. By the time Reagan left office eight years later, the lowest quintile's take had fallen to 3.8 percent while the highest quintile's had risen to 46.8 percent.

But there were two major problems with these data as the *Times* presented them. First was the implication of a fixed economic pie, whereby one group's gain necessarily meant another group's loss. In fact, however, the pie itself was growing, so that it was possible for all groups to be better off in absolute terms even if one group's share was falling. And that is exactly what had happened in the 1980's: although those at the top did especially well, all households showed a gain, with the average real income of the lowest quintile rising by almost 10 percent (from $9,348 in 1981 to $10,058 in 1989, in 2003 dollars).

The second problem was that the data measured only before-tax cash income, thus excluding almost everything we have done as a society to equalize incomes—imposing high tax rates on the rich, and providing substantial in-kind welfare benefits for the poor in the form of housing subsidies, food stamps, and much else. To this day, although the Census Bureau produces "experimental" income measures in which these factors are taken into account, it has not yet changed the official measure, which continues to ignore most taxes and benefits. The impact is substantial: for 2001, the latest year available, the inclusion of taxes alone in the Bureau's calculations would raise the lowest quintile's share of income from 3.5 percent to 4.4 percent and lower the top quintile's share from about 50 to 45 percent.

In any event, the *Times*'s heavy focus on income shares tended to leave the impression that the same people were in the same brackets from year to year. Were this the case, there would indeed have been a strong argument for income redistribution. But the reality was, and remains, otherwise, though to prove it one needs data that cannot be derived from the annual Census income-and-poverty reports, which are just "snapshots" of households at a given moment.

To determine mobility, one needs to do longitudinal studies, tracking the same specific individuals and families over time. One of the longest-running projects of this kind is the Panel Study on Income Dynamics (PSID) at the University of Michigan, which has been following several thousand families since 1968. According to a 1984 analysis based on this source, almost half of the families in the bottom income quintile in 1971 had risen to a higher quintile by 1978. Over those seven years, 22 percent had risen one bracket, 9.5 percent two brackets, 7 percent three brackets, and 6 percent all the way to the top quintile of income.

Also in 1984, the Census Bureau initiated its own Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), allowing it, too, to study the same people over time.* The results confirmed the PSID findings. According to a 1989 Census report, almost 20 percent of people in the lowest quintile in 1984 had risen to a higher quintile by the following year, while an equivalent number of those in the top quintile had fallen to a lower one.

As one would expect, extending the time period yields an even higher degree of mobility. Using the PSID data, a 1995 study by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas found that in the decade-and-a-half between 1975 and 1991, fully 95 percent of those in the lowest income quintile had risen to a higher quintile, while about 40 percent of those in the top quintile had fallen to a lower one. Similarly, the most recent SIPP report, looking at families in the three-year period between 1996 and 1999, found almost 40 percent of those in the lowest quintile rising to a higher one, with almost the same number falling from the highest quintile to a lower one. As for poverty in the same period, only 2 percent remained officially poor for very long.

THE ISSUE of income inequality hit a peak during the 1992 presidential campaign. Bill Clinton made a point of talking about it at almost every campaign stop, promising that, if elected, he would force the rich to pay their fair share. In formulating his case, he relied heavily on research by the economist Paul Krugman, as channeled through Sylvia Nasar, a reporter for the *New York Times*. One particularly inflammatory piece appeared on the front page of the *Times* on March 5, 1992. Citing Krugman as her source, Nasar wrote that during the 1980's, the top 1 percent of American families had received an astonishing 60 percent—three-fifths—of the aggregate national gain in after-tax income.

At least, that is what appeared in the edition of the *Times* distributed in the Washington, D.C. area—the one seen by Clinton and the one that caused him, according to his campaign press secretary Dee Dee Myers, to go "crazy." Duly cranking

* I was randomly chosen to participate in the SIPP program for several years in the mid-1990's.

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up the rhetoric, he hammered George H.W. Bush mercilessly on this theme.

The only problem was that Nasar or Krugman had thoroughly misread the data. The top 1 percent had not come anywhere near three-fifths of the aggregate income gain in the 1980's. Had they done so, that would have left the lower 99 percent of the population dividing the other two-fifths, with highly disconcerting implications. Rather, the increase in their average income was 60-percent greater than the increase in the income of the rest of the population. But as I have already noted, the real income of *every* income class increased in the same period.

Republicans were furious with the *Times* report. But the paper refused to admit error or even to issue a clarification. Only now, if one goes to the *Times* online archives, will one find a (silently) corrected version of the Nasar article. This is what is known at the paper as a "rowback": fixing an error without ever acknowledging it.

A few months after the Nasar story ran, the Bush administration sought to retaliate by issuing a Treasury Department study that utilized tax records unavailable to private researchers.* Matching tax returns by the same filers ten years apart, Treasury economists found that 86 percent of those in the bottom quintile in 1979 had moved to a higher quintile by 1989, with 15 percent rising all the way to the top. Similar findings were reported at about the same time by the Urban Institute—not known as a haven for conservative Republicans. Comparing the same families in 1977 and 1986, it too found a high degree of income mobility, and it also confirmed that the income gains of the 1980's were broadly shared. Indeed, the real average family income of those in the bottom quintile had risen by fully 77 percent between 1977 and 1986, while, in stark contrast to the *New York Times* portrait, those in the top quintile saw an increase of only 5 percent—the lowest of any income group.

BUT THEN came the Clinton years, a period in which the *Times* developed a quite different perspective on the whole question of income distribution.

Between 1992 and 2000, according to the Census Bureau, the share of aggregate income going to the top quintile rose from almost 47 to almost 50 percent—an increase larger than the one during the Reagan "decade of greed." Similarly, the top 5 percent of households saw their share rise by 3.3 points, while the comparable increase during the Reagan years had been just 1.8 points. Yet the *Times* found nothing particularly objectionable about this.

To the contrary: by 1995, in the *Times Magazine*, the paper's editorial writer Michael Weinstein, in an odd flip, was celebrating the gains of the ultra-rich. Defending Michael Milken's $500-million paycheck from Drexel Burnham Lambert in 1987, and the $200 million earned by Michael Eisner from Disney in 1993, Weinstein reminded his readers that these men had taken risks, made key corporate decisions, and were paid out of an increase in profits that they themselves had been largely responsible for. So why attack them?

Besides, Weinstein went on to explain, the gains of the super-rich did not themselves cause an increase in income inequality. "There are simply too few super-rich to matter," he wrote, and "even if large companies were to eliminate compensation for CEO's, the return to shareholders would rise by a measly 6 cents for every $100 they've invested."

By 1999, even Sylvia Nasar had formulated a more nuanced view (partially, perhaps, because she herself had by then earned a handsome return from her best-selling book, *A Beautiful Mind*). In an April 14 article, she correctly pointed to the need to take account of mobility when thinking about income distribution:

> Growing inequality could have devastating effects if it convinced those at the bottom that efforts to move up are doomed to failure. But largely the opposite has happened. . . . Most ordinary Americans . . . seem to feel that, whatever has happened to the income distribution, opportunities abound—and not just for the rich.

Another factor that may have had some influence on the *Times*'s treatment of these issues was the growing presence of women in the labor force, and especially at the highest levels of wage earners. As Diana Furchtgott-Roth of the Hudson Institute has pointed out, because income data are typically compiled for families or households rather than for individuals, and because so many women now work outside the home, the simple act of marriage tends to "worsen" the distribution of income in an upward direction. A man and woman who separately would be in the middle quintile are likely to jump into the top quintile once married. Similarly, the economists Katherine Bradbury and Jane Katz have shown that families with an employed woman move up the distribution scale faster and more fre-

* The study was initiated by Congressman Dick Armey (R-TX), who then had to pull teeth to get it released.

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quently than those in which the wife does not work outside the home, and are less likely to move down.

FOR SOME years, then, little was to be seen in the *Times* about the maldistribution of income. Even its in-house scold, Paul Krugman, who was appointed a columnist in 1999, had little to offer on the subject. For their part, the news pages were relatively free of the sorts of de-facto editorializing that had been so common in the 1980's.

But by 2001 the younger Bush was in the White House, and the times, and the *Times*, were changing again. Krugman, for instance, returned to the fray with a *Times Magazine* piece in 2002 charging that America had entered a "new Gilded Age," and in August 2004, smack in the middle of last year's presidential campaign, a report by Timothy Egan charged that the American middle class was disappearing. Accompanying Egan's article was a chart that showed a fall in the proportion of households with incomes (in 2003 dollars) in the $25,000-$75,000 range: from almost 52 percent in 1980 to just under 45 percent in 2003.

Note the start date—1980, the year Ronald Reagan was elected—and the finish date—2003, on George W. Bush's watch. If, as seems clear, the point was to put the blame for the sufferings of the middle class on Republican rather than Democratic policies, this was an absolutely necessary move. For had the calculation been done with a start date of 1992, the year Bill Clinton was elected, and a finish date of 2000, the year he left office, the results would have shown the exact same trend: among those earning $25,000-$75,000, a drop of almost three percentage points.

But the most serious defect of this particular article was its implied message that a significant percentage of those defined as "middle class" had become poor. This was totally untrue. In fact, the ranks of the poor (those earning under $25,000, in the *Times*'s definition) fell during the same two-plus decades from 33.1 percent of the population in 1980 to 29 percent in 2003. Looking at the data from the other end, we see that the percentage of those making more than $75,000 rose in the same period from just under 15 percent to just over 26 percent.

In other words, the ranks of both the poor and the middle class shrank for one reason only—more of them were well off. And more of them, one might add, were black. To be precise, the proportion of black households making less than $25,000 (in 2003 dollars) fell from 53.8 to 43.4 percent in the period 1980-2003, while the ranks of the black middle class increased from 40.5 to 42.9 percent and black families earning over $75,000 rose from 5.8 to 13.7 percent.

To turn all this good news into bad, the *Times* had to go to extraordinary lengths indeed.

IN THE event, of course, neither John Kerry nor the *Times* gained any traction with the class-warfare issue in 2004. Many of those who were supposedly suffering under George W. Bush's economic policies seemed to vote for him anyway, a possibility the *Times* no doubt anticipated in undertaking its major research effort into class in America, to which we may now return.

The series that opened on May 15 would deal with the influence of class across a host of related topics: health, marriage, religion, education, immigration, and more. But the essence was captured in the first article, an overview entitled "Shadowy Lines that Still Divide." Its central thrust was to downplay the role of the one enduring economic factor that has time and again undercut the Left's efforts to incite class warfare—namely, mobility. To do this, the *Times* writers had to get around all the data I have already discussed, and to redefine mobility itself.

This they accomplished in two ways. First, "Shadowy Lines that Still Divide" suggested that, although individuals may appear to demonstrate income mobility over the course of their lives, eventually they end up in the same place they started—which is to say, in the same income class as their parents. In other words, the principal standard for measuring mobility should be intergenerational mobility. Second, whatever the degree of mobility in American society, it is no greater now than it has been in the past, nor is our society any longer to be distinguished in this respect from Europe.

Recent academic research, much of it financed by the Russell Sage Foundation in New York, supports the *Times*'s twin theses.* But there is an equally large body of research showing that mobility has in fact risen here, and that it is still higher than in Europe. A highly technical debate on these issues has been conducted for some time in academic journals like the *Journal of Income Distribution*, the *Review of Income and Wealth*, and the *Journal of Human Resources*. The *Times*, however, mostly cites

* See, for example, *Unequal Chances: Family Background and Economic Success*, ed. Samuel Bowles, Herbert Gintis, and Melissa Osborne Groves (Princeton University Press, 2005) and *Generational Income Mobility in North America and Europe*, ed. Miles Corak (Cambridge University Press, 2004).

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only one side of the debate—and specifically those who claim to have found a sharp decline in intergenerational mobility in recent years. So let me fill in the other side.

The economist Dean Lillard of Cornell is among those who think the data suggesting a decline in mobility are flawed. In his estimation, they ignore a substantial population of men who are intermittently unemployed for a year or more. Including this population, he shows in an article coauthored with Kenneth Couch of the University of Connecticut, causes the correlation between a father's and son's earnings largely to disappear. The same finding is confirmed by Angela Fertig of Indiana University, who cites data demonstrating a rise over recent decades in intergenerational mobility and opportunity. One's family, Fertig concludes, does not predetermine one's position in the income distribution.

When it comes to comparative mobility between and among countries, the data are especially difficult to assess. One complicating factor is that in some European countries, heavier taxes and more generous welfare benefits than ours have the effect of compressing the distribution of income. In Sweden, for instance, the spread between the highest and lowest quintiles is much smaller than it is here. This means that it is easier to move from one quintile to another, but also that such movement is less meaningful for one's living standard.

In the end, what really matters is not whether there has been some small change in the degree of mobility in America but whether the level of mobility remains high. After all, it cannot rise infinitely—if it did, at some point income distribution would become purely random, with no linkage whatsoever to family, education, or anything else. Complaining that mobility is not rising is akin to lamenting that baseball batting averages are no higher today than they were a generation ago. There is no reason to think they should be.

WHAT IS truly important for a society is how people in general perceive their circumstances. In this respect, it is clear that Americans continue to believe in the Horatio Alger model, according to which everyone, no matter how humble his beginnings, has a chance to make it big. Interestingly, the *Times* itself provides the strongest evidence for the perduring strength of this belief in the poll data it compiled for its series and has made available on its website.*

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of this research is that some figures are given over time. Thus, in 1983, people were asked: "Do you think it's still possible to start out poor in this country, work hard, and become rich?" At the time, only 57 percent of respondents agreed with this proposition, while 38 percent disagreed. By the 1990's, the percentage of positive responses had risen to 70. As of March 2005, 80 percent said it was possible for anyone to become rich in America, and only 19 percent said it was not.

The *Times* poll also provides a useful perspective on intergenerational mobility. In one question, people were asked: "Compared to your parents when they were the age you are now, do you think your own standard of living now is much better, somewhat better, about the same, somewhat worse, or much worse than theirs was?" In 1994, the first time the question was asked, 31 percent answered "much better," 32 percent "somewhat better," 21 percent "about the same," 11 percent "somewhat worse," and 3 percent "much worse." In 2005, the corresponding figures were 39 percent, 27 percent, 20 percent, 9 percent, and 4 percent.

In other questions, people were asked to compare their social class today with the one in which they grew up. Across the board they responded the same way, reporting that they lived in a higher social class today.

On balance, then, it appears that most people believe themselves to be living better than their parents. What is more, 40 percent of them believe that, as compared with the 1970's, the likelihood of one's moving up in social class is greater today, while 35 percent think it is the same; only 23 percent think otherwise.

Of course, the *general* standard of living has risen over time: the typical middle-class family today occupies better housing, drives nicer cars, and owns things (like computers) that would have been luxuries inconceivable even to the very rich 30 years ago. Acknowledging this point, the *Times* spins it so as to demean, if not to deny, its significance:

> Factories in China and elsewhere churn out picture-taking cellphones and other luxuries that are now affordable to almost everyone. Federal deregulation has done the same for plane tickets and long-distance phone calls. Banks, more confident about measuring risk, now extend credit to low-income families, so owning a home or driving a new car is no longer evidence that someone is middle class.

About this, the paper is flat wrong: there is no more definitive symbol of middle-class status than

* www.nytimes.com/pages/national/class

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owning one's home. But one can say much more: in recent years, home ownership in America has helped measurably in *reducing* inequalities in the distribution of wealth. Rich people have most of their wealth in financial assets, which have done poorly of late; by contrast, most of the wealth of the middle class is in housing, which has witnessed a vast run-up in value. The net effect is that aggregate wealth has become much more evenly distributed.

The role of housing is also important in interpreting income data. The *Times* poll found that 25 percent of the entire American population own their homes outright, with no mortgage. Among retirees, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), three-fourths are homeowners, and an amazing 86 percent of these own their homes free and clear. In effect, all such people have substantial income—what economists would call imputed rent, or rent they do not have to pay—that never shows up in the Census data, making them appear less well off than they really are.

The BLS data offer another insight into the question of living standards. In 2002, the bottom quintile of consumers, with a before-tax income of $8,316, were spending well over twice that amount ($19,061); the top quintile, with an income of $121,367, were spending only $79,199. Thus, if one bases one's calculations on expenditures rather than on income, living standards are much more equal among rich and poor.

How can this be? The main reason is that there are many retirees in the bottom quintile, people with low incomes but substantial savings. Those savings are being drawn down to supplement their incomes and maintain their standard of living. Similarly, the bottom quintile includes many people temporarily unemployed because of a job loss or some other setback. With every reason to expect that their income will bounce back, they may be borrowing to pay for consumption at, to use another term of economists, their permanent income level.

As for why the wealthy are consuming much less than their income, the answer is that they are saving and investing—adding to the national seed corn, so to speak, and providing the capital that will eventually raise productivity and wages across the economy. If the rich did not save so much voluntarily, the nation as a whole would be that much poorer.

IN THE end, luckily, one doubts that the *Times*'s effort to revive the idea of class consciousness in America will bear fruit. Regardless of what some academic research may show, people simply do not perceive reality as the *Times* construes it.

And this brings us back to the subject of tax cuts for the rich. A whopping 76 percent of those polled by the *Times* favor abolition of the estate tax—which is paid only by the richest 2 percent of decedents. Going a step beyond Thomas Frank in *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, Michael Graetz and Ian Shapiro, both of Yale University, argue that these Americans are victims of false consciousness, having been tricked into going against their own self-interest by the self-interest of a small but determined group of wealthy families.*

More likely, however, is that the *hoi polloi* are indeed motivated by their perceived self-interest. Rightly or wrongly, many of them believe that they or their children will one day find themselves wealthy enough to incur the estate tax. Once again the *Times* poll inadvertently provides confirming evidence: 11 percent reported it was very likely that they would some day be wealthy, and another 34 percent thought it was somewhat likely. Only 22 percent said it was not at all likely.

In short, it is going to take a lot more than a series of *New York Times* articles to convince most people that they have no chance of success and will die in the same social class into which they were born. This is hardly to suggest that the *Times* series is therefore a harmless exercise; one can be sure that its findings will be cited as indisputable and solidly grounded fact in many a political and ideological campaign to come. Still, much more newsworthy would be an inquiry into why so many wealthy Americans betray *their* supposed class interest by voting Democratic. So far, that does not appear to figure on the *Times*'s agenda.

* *Death by a Thousand Cuts: The Fight over Taxing Inherited Wealth* (Princeton University Press, 2005).

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Europe's "No"

Michel Gurfinkiel

On February 20 of this year, voters in Spain ratified the European Constitutional Treaty or European Constitution, as it is usually referred to. As the world knows by now, this is the document intended to supersede every previous all-European treaty and pact and to provide the European Union (EU) with a unified legal and political framework. Most Spanish political parties, including the ruling Socialist party and the main opposition party, had campaigned for a yes vote, which won by a resounding 75 percent. The turnout, however, was very low: 42 percent of registered voters.

At the time, this fact was largely ignored. According to the conventional wisdom among both pundits and politicians, February's Spanish referendum would set the pace for the other EU countries that had similarly opted to hold a popular referendum on the constitution rather than deciding the matter in parliament. These were France (where the vote was to be held on May 29), the Netherlands (June 1), Luxemburg (July 10), Poland (September 25), Denmark (September 27), Portugal (October), Ireland (by the end of the year), the United Kingdom (spring 2006), and the Czech Republic (June 2006). Each would surely vote yes, perhaps not overwhelmingly but by a workable majority. As for the fifteen countries that had opted for ratification by parliament, the outcome seemed no less predictable: almost everywhere, Europhiles outnumbered Euroskeptics.

In short, there would be no repetition of the discomfiture that had marked the passage of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. In France, that founding document of today's European economic and monetary union barely squeaked through by a margin of less than 1 percent, in Denmark it was rejected twice, and in Ireland it failed once before being finally approved.

The "Spanish effect" lasted for all of one month. On March 18, the French left-of-center tabloid *Le Parisien* published a poll indicating that French opposition to the draft constitution, which had hitherto lagged at 35 percent in January and 41 percent in early March, had suddenly risen to 51 percent. In a second poll, published three days later by the conservative daily *Le Figaro*, the no's were up to 52 percent. The political class panicked, and not only in France.

The rise of a strong negative sentiment came as a blow to every mainstream French body. After all, the ruling conservative party (UMP) of Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy supported the constitution almost to a man; so did France's Christian-Democratic party (UDF) led by François Bayrou. On the Left, François Hollande's Socialists were solidly for the constitution as well. True, Laurent Fabius, a former Socialist prime minister and fi-

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nance minister, had challenged the mainstream Left consensus, but his position had been defeated in a party referendum the previous December.

Now, however, the French situation was no longer looking like a carbon copy of Spain but was taking on an altogether different complexion. Unlike their Spanish neighbors, the French were apparently not prepared to abide by the establishment's summons. But neither were they about to stay home. Instead, they seemed to be casting their lot either with the Fabius wing of the Socialist party or, more ominously, with a congeries of right-wing and left-wing radicals who had campaigned against the constitution since the beginning. Those included Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front, Philippe de Villiers's *Mouvement pour la France*, the Communists, the Trotskyites, and the rank and file of the Greens.

In theory, the referendum on Europe had nothing to do with domestic politics. In practice, as everyone understood, things were different. A strong no would be taken as a demand for deep changes at home, if not as a species of popular revolt. Three years earlier, a presidential race had already revealed the dysfunctional aspect of French democracy: in the first balloting, Chirac, the outgoing president, and Lionel Jospin, the Socialist prime minister, had fared so poorly as to allow Le Pen, an unreconstructed neofascist, to come in second and thus win the chance to face off against Chirac in the next round.

Although Chirac won that round resoundingly, and in the ensuing parliamentary election secured an absolute majority in the National Assembly, both he and the political establishment had "seen the wolf," as the French say. Its fangs were visible not only in the specter of a Le Pen resurgence but in the staggering 47 percent of the overall vote that had been rung up by various other radical candidates, from Right to Left. The European referendum was now threatening to bring the wolf back on stage.

The implications for Europe at large were no less far-reaching. What if, for instance, the Dutch were also to say no when they cast their ballots just three days after the French? The Netherlands had been one of the six nations involved in the original Treaty of Rome, which established the European Union in 1957, and had maintained a clean Europhile record ever since. Now, opposition to the constitutional draft was mounting there, too. If both France and the Netherlands were to repudiate their pasts, what would the other countries do? Restiveness over the new treaty was already noticeable in Denmark and Poland, and was perceptible even in Sweden, which had opted for the presumably safer route of parliamentary ratification.

ALARMED AS they were, the French rushed into almost every trap lying in wait for them. The government, instead of distancing itself as much as possible from the outcome of the vote, did just the opposite. Chirac and his prime minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, declared dramatically that a no vote would be a national disaster, in effect threatening the citizenry with a spanking if it failed to deliver the right answer. As a result, anti-constitutional sentiment, instead of receding, consolidated all over the country.

Then there was the Bolkestein affair. In 2004, Frits Bolkestein, a Dutchman then serving as the EU's market commissioner, had issued a directive effectively deregulating the service sector by enabling European companies to operate anywhere in the EU according to the laws of their country of registration. This was perfectly consistent with the longstanding EU commitment to a single, highly competitive European market, and in formulating the regulation Bolkestein was simply complying with relevant decisions of the EU's governing bodies. But implementation would mean that plumbers or mechanics or masons or truckers from, say, Poland or Slovakia would henceforth be allowed to work in countries like France or Germany for the same low wages and low benefits they were earning at home, thus undermining the high-wage, high-benefit economies of their host countries.

Astonishingly, very few people in France had given a thought to this matter until Philippe de Villiers, one of the EU's most implacable critics, raised a stir by warning that adopting the constitution would accelerate Europe's *Bolkesteinisation* (a coinage darkly evocative of both Bolshevism and Frankenstein). Chirac had no choice but to maintain, against all evidence, that his government actually opposed the Bolkestein directive and would ask the Commission to rescind it. This highly unconvincing statement merely reinforced the growing sentiment to vote no.

Then Chirac decided, rather bravely, to speak directly on television with French youth. The president of France is a very powerful man, whose extensive influence over the media allows him to set the terms of any such discussion. For some reason, however, nothing was done to script the event, and the show, airing on April 14, was a debacle. The young audience, including many Muslims of North African background, evinced no respect whatsoev-

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er either for the man or for his office, and the normally unflappable Chirac was at a loss to respond to them. Polls the following day registered still more gains in the no column.

Nor was that the end of the government's embarrassments. Among those campaigning for a yes vote was Simone Veil, an icon of French political correctness. A former Auschwitz inmate, she had served as a French minister of health before being elected in 1979 to the presidency of the European Parliament. Veil is also a member of France's constitutional court. But instead of asking her to resign before taking part in a political campaign, the court insouciantly granted her an "exceptional leave" for the duration. Robert Badinter, a former president of the court, a former Socialist minister of justice, a staunch supporter of the constitution—and himself the son of a Holocaust victim—was shocked at this flouting of judicial ethics, and he let his shock be known. Chirac's reported reply—"Why be overly legalistic?"—infuriated yet another segment of public opinion: conservatives otherwise prepared to support the constitution as a bulwark of the rule of law.

By the beginning of May, two more iconic figures—Jospin, a former Socialist prime minister, and Jacques Delors, a socialist and former chairman of the European Commission—had joined the fight for the constitution. They concentrated their attack on Fabius and other left-wing Euroskeptics in whose eyes the new constitution, like the entire European project, was far too "liberal"—a term that in French parlance means not Left or progressive but rather conservative and free-market-oriented.

On the contrary, argued Jospin and Delors, the constitution expressed the social-democratic traditions of postwar Europe, and its main purpose was to help build up the Continent as an alternative superpower, thereby preventing a surrender to American-style "globalization." Some conservatives, including Raffarin, likewise resorted to this brand of "continental" rhetoric, complete with anti-American or even anti-Chinese innuendo.

For a few days, the new approach seemed to be working: the yeses rose a bit and even briefly overtook the no's. Among the contributing factors was the worry of some French conservatives that a rejection of the constitution would redound to the fortunes of the extreme Left; others shrank from allying themselves simultaneously with the extreme Left *and* Le Pen. Nevertheless, two weeks before the referendum, the no's were leading again by a margin of 3 or 4 points, and there was reason to believe that most people had already made up their minds. In Holland, too, a no was seeming likely, with polls in early May showing opposition to the constitution having risen from April's 53 percent to a solid 60 percent.

On May 29 and June 1, the fears of the Europhiles were realized. France rejected the draft constitution by 55 to 45 percent, Holland by 62 to 38 percent. Five days later, Britain indefinitely suspended its own scheduled referendum.

IT IS important to distinguish between opposition to the European Constitution and opposition to the EU. The two are connected, but they are not quite the same.

From the start, the overriding reason for the constitution's unpopularity was its sheer clumsiness. Every French citizen awoke one morning to find in his mailbox a 191-page booklet containing, in fine print, the projected Constitutional Treaty itself (87 pages), protocols and annexes (72 pages), and a final act (23 pages). Why three separate texts were needed, and how they related to each other—did the constitution stand by itself, or was its approval conditional on approval of the others?—was a deep puzzle.

Wading through the documents was an even more troubling experience—worse than a mortgage agreement, my wife remarked. Only a political scientist or lawyer already steeped in the relevant issues could have been expected to follow the intricacies of the no fewer than 448 constitutional articles and to extract from this morass what it all really meant for the nations of Europe, let alone for the average citizen. No wonder so many commentaries and supercommentaries emerged in the months before the referendum, some of them even becoming best-sellers.

Add to this the peculiarity of the arrangements being proposed. On the surface, the Constitutional Treaty *looked* like the founding document of a regular nation-state, with all the familiar features of such an entity: a flag, a single currency, an anthem, a motto, a president, a foreign secretary, a council of ministers, a court of justice, a central bank, an audit bureau, a parliament, scores of committees, even a bill of rights. Yet there were also constant reminders of the fact that the European Union is not, or not yet, a super-state at all, and that the nations involved are still sovereign powers with autonomous rights in such crucial areas as national defense, diplomacy, taxation, UN membership, and even currency. (Although the euro is "the currency of the Union," every member has the right to retain its own national currency.) Mean-

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while, the European Commission is still there, hanging in the air or, better, suspended over the heads of the European people, an emanation neither of them nor of their states but with considerable power and sway over both.

"Are we pregnant, or not?" asked my wife very reasonably. Was the constitution that of a federation, a confederacy, a league, a regional United Nations, a reconstituted Holy Roman Empire? How could a treaty among sovereign nation-states *be* constitutional without shredding the sovereignty of the independent contracting states?

More often than not, in the face of such contradictions, European commentators simply gave up. Bastien François, a professor of political science at the Pantheon-Sorbonne University in Paris (arguably the best law school in the realm), maintained in a small book published in April that since the "European polity" was something entirely new, it could not be expected to conform to the established standards of public law:

> Europe is neither a confederacy nor a federation. . . . In fact, a new name should have been devised. . . . It is being built with existing legal instruments, but with a twist. As compared with the traditional architecture of democratic institutions, there is something a bit baroque about it.

Baroque, indeed. Other commentators, including a number of American constitutional scholars, eschewed such sophistries and pronounced the projected European Constitution neither complex nor innovative but simply poorly designed. This, for example, was the early assessment of Jack Rakove, a Stanford professor of history who wrote in 2003 that the European Constitution reminded him not so much of the U.S. Constitution of 1787 as of the ill-fated Articles of Confederation four years earlier. Interestingly, François too thought the European Constitution would not last: he gave it no more than 30 years of political life.

The unattractiveness of the constitution had to do not only with its impenetrability and seeming unworkability but with the idiom in which it was couched. It is an open question whether the European Union, which maintains 24 official languages and is in the business of translating every single document every single day, is capable of composing a unified and inspiring founding act. No less questionable is whether contemporary Europeans, even more crippled by political correctness than contemporary Americans, have the power to express themselves in sober and confident tones like the members of the Philadelphia Convention or of the French National Assembly of 1789. And still another question is whether the European political class can even remember the great models of Western public rhetoric or their sources in the Bible and the Greek and Latin classics.*

What is beyond doubt is that the constitution lacked gravitas—or, rather, that every attempt at gravitas ended in the ridiculous. Here, for instance, is the preamble, wherein the assorted sovereigns explain why they are promulgating a Constitutional Treaty:

> His Majesty the King of the Belgians, the President of the Czech Republic, Her Majesty the Queen of Denmark [etc., etc., etc.], drawing their inspiration from the cultural, religious, and humanistic heritages of Europe, the source out of which such universal values as the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person have developed, as well as freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law, convinced that Europe, standing reunited in the wake of painful experiences, now intends to move forward on the path of civilization, progress, and prosperity, in the best interest of all its inhabitants, including the weakest and the most destitute, that she intends to remain a continent open to culture, knowledge, and social progress, and that she wishes to deepen the democratic and transparent character of public life and work for peace, justice, and solidarity all over the world. . . .

And so forth, droningly onward. As for the second part of the constitution, known as the Charter of Fundamental Rights, it is, in Rakove's phrase, "a mere shopping list of social benefits," reenacting with almost obsessive fidelity previous European conventions and charters on human and civil rights. Making sure to ban the death penalty once and for all, it upholds the need to fight any kind of discrimination, including on the basis of "sexual orientation," to recognize and respect "the right of senior citizens to lead a decent and independent life and to take part in social and cultural life," and to do all this and much more while avoiding, in one wonderfully elastic injunction, "exorbitant public deficits."

STILL, IT is not really the constitution itself that the French and the Dutch were bent on rejecting. Nor was it even the concept of European

* For the struggle over including any reference in the Constitution to the religious and specifically the Christian heritage of Europe, see, in COMMENTARY, "The Cathedral and the Cube" by George Weigel, June 2004.

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unity. Rather, it was the impact on their lives, direct and indirect, of more than a decade of actual EU governance under the Maastricht regime. In order to understand this, one has to go back beyond even Maastricht, to the beginning.

Europe as we know it was born right after World War II. To be sure, there had been a strong feeling for centuries that all European states and nations shared common roots, a common culture, and common interests. By 1945, however, this vague feeling had taken on new significance. No European nation was going to be able to recover on its own from the devastation of the war, or to survive on its own.

The British were still something of an exception to the rule, able to entertain at least for a while the illusion of a renovated empire, now recast as a Commonwealth of Nations, and to rely on their "special relationship" with the United States. By contrast, the continental countries knew they had no choice but to work together. Even American aid under the Marshall Plan would be ineffective without close cooperation among neighbors, which alone could lead not only to economic revival but to the long-sought dream of peaceful relations at last.

Winston Churchill, who in the postwar years was more inclined than most Englishmen to consider an all-European option, encapsulated the general feeling in a speech he delivered in Zurich in 1946:

> I wish to speak to you today about the tragedy of Europe, this noble continent . . . the home of all the great parent races of the Western world, the foundation of Christian faith and Christian ethics. It is the origin of most of the culture, arts, philosophy, and science both of ancient and modern times. . . . If Europe were once united in the sharing of its common inheritance, there would be no limit to the happiness, the prosperity, and the glory which its 300 million or 400 million people would enjoy.

THE CONTINENT, however, included Germany. It was one thing, and a fairly easy thing, for the three Low Countries to coalesce into a single economic unit to be known as Benelux. The Nordic nations, too, quite naturally set up various kinds of cooperative institutions. Along similar lines, some observers, including the French philosopher Alexandre Kojève, briefly hoped to bring together the Latin countries: France and Italy first, then a post-Franco Spain and a post-Salazar Portugal. But Germany, even in the truncated form of the Federal Republic that had been carved out of the three Western occupation zones, was still the most populous country in Europe and its largest industrial base. Europe without West Germany would not work; West Germany without Europe might fail.

There was, in those years, not only the sinister prospect of a revived Nazi movement but the well-founded fear that Communism, already entrenched in the so-called German Democratic Republic, might engulf the whole of the former Reich. Here again, Churchill was the first to draw the logical conclusion, calling for "something which will astonish you . . . a kind of United States of Europe . . . based on a partnership between France and Germany."

The trouble was that the Germans were neither loved nor trusted. They had been the aggressors in the recent war. They had committed unspeakable acts of barbarity against civilians. Their ultimate downfall was regarded as well and truly deserved. Making the prospect of union even more troubling was the fact that, throughout the war, Nazi propaganda had incessantly proclaimed the virtues of European unity and cooperation—under Nazi rule, of course. Although the Federal Republic was a different animal, a regime run by people who had opposed Hitler, still, resentment elsewhere in Europe was enormous, and the Communist parties knew how to harness it for their own aims.

How, then, were the Germans to be brought into a new Europe as full partners? At the end of the day, the Europeans acted schizophrenically. The rational hemisphere of their brains told them that Germany should be included. The emotional hemisphere rejected the possibility. The only points of (reluctant) compromise lay in the area of economic cooperation and in the more nebulous arena of culture, ethics, and human rights. Any further coordination—as for instance in an integrated European defense system under the aegis of NATO—was out of the question.

The way forward, then, was to circumvent politics by focusing on economics. This is what Jean Monnet, the planning commissioner of postwar France and a staunch advocate of a "United States of Europe," had in mind when, along with his fellow Catholics Konrad Adenauer of West Germany, Robert Schumann of France, and Acide de Gasperi of Italy, he drafted the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Europe was to be organized, first and foremost, as a common market. This, properly administered over the course of one or two decades, would enable it to achieve American levels of productivity. Then—and only then—would political and social

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integration follow. The more that Europeans worked together and prospered together, the more they would learn to live together.

MONNET'S STRATEGY worked beautifully. In no small measure, this was thanks to the postwar *Pax Americana* and the global economic growth that marked the period from the 1950's through the early 1970's—the "thirty glorious years," as the French economist Jean Fourastié would call them in retrospect. The dollar served as a de-facto world currency. American-dominated organizations, from the OECD to the World Bank, from the IMF to GATT, provided for macroeconomic stability. Energy was cheap. Postwar reconstruction, the baby boom, and the emergence or consolidation of a full-blown consumer economy boosted productivity. In terms of national defense, the European countries and Japan had a free ride, being neither inclined nor permitted to resume their war-making. As for countering the threat of Soviet nuclear weapons, that too was almost entirely the Americans' business. Although things turned sour in the 1970's, in the wake of the OPEC-induced oil crisis and the Vietnam war, by 1980, under Ronald Reagan, America had once again taken the economic and strategic lead, and the momentum continued during the 90's.

This is not to say that the Common Market—or the European Community, as it was soon to be called, or the European Union as it was renamed by the Maastricht Treaty, or just plain Europe, as most people called it—was less than a success story in its own right. What Monnet had had in mind was not just a free-trade zone but an elaborate system of mutual dependence whereby the more affluent countries or regions would help the poorer to adapt to a modern economy and develop their own potential. Indeed, the economic community or union—first the six founding nations of France, Germany, Italy, and the Low Countries, then the newcomers (Britain, Ireland, and Denmark in 1972, Greece, Spain, and Portugal a bit later)—gradually assumed a more unified look.

After 1963, all of European agriculture was overhauled by the central planners. Many farmers were induced to leave the land, while those who remained were helped to increase their yield dramatically and to sell their goods everywhere within the European community. Places like England, where farming had almost disappeared in the early 20th century, became productive again.

Europe's achievement as a single economic entity was impressive enough to silence its critics wherever they were to be found. Countries like Sweden, Finland, and Austria, which had initially stayed out, were now eager to join. So, in time, were Mediterranean outposts like Malta and Cyprus and the former Communist-ruled nations of Poland, the Baltic states, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and Slovenia. By the turn of the millennium, Gaullist France, despite the usual invocations of its independence and national grandeur, had become as supportive of the EU as the more genuinely federalist Netherlands or Germany. Some French political leaders were extending Raffarin's vision of a "continental European bloc" to include not just Turkey or Ukraine but even the former French colonies of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia in North Africa.

BUT THERE is a cloud to every silver lining, and a nemesis to every success story. The problem of Europe was that Monnet's twist—economics first—led to a bizarre, quasi-political arrangement. The European Commission, in charge of setting wages and prices and much else besides, grew as powerful as, and in some respects more powerful than, the constituent nation-states. At the same time, no offsetting center of democratic power—either a European parliament with teeth, or an elected European president—emerged.

At first, this too seemed to be in everybody's interest. Under a non-democratic regime, the various nation-states, especially the three great powers of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, could more easily protect themselves and their own establishments. Big business and NGO's also found it easier to lobby the EU's unelected experts and civil servants than a democratically elected parliament or executive. Especially when it came to unpopular reforms, like liberalizing the economy or unraveling some of the more extreme manifestations of the welfare state, it was safer for a government to be seen as complying with European Union directives than as acting on its own initiative.

The average European citizen was not fooled, however. Resistance in the early 1990's to the Maastricht Treaty was one sign of mistrust and mounting resentment. Another, in the late 1990's, was the widespread rejection in many important EU countries of the projected conversion to a single currency: by 1997, 79 percent of Germans, 76 percent of British, and 66 percent of French were insisting on a referendum on this issue, presumably in order to have the chance to reject it. As for the largely ornamental European Parliament that sits

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in Strasbourg, since the mid-1990's nobody in Europe (the Italians excepted) has ever cared enough even to vote in its elections. Last year, turnout in France and Germany was a measly 33 percent, Sweden and the UK hovered below 30 percent, and even Poland, where pro-European enthusiasm runs high, could muster only a dismal 21 percent.

IN SUM, what is obvious is that this year's rebellion against the European Constitution signifies still another attempt, if the most serious so far, to "repatriate" the European Union, and return it to the European people for whose benefit it was presumably devised. For what is democracy about, after all? On a minimalistic, Churchillian view—that it is a more effective system, in practical terms, than any other—democracy functions much like the free market. Despite the apparent chaos of unending debate and frequent elections, more often than not a hidden hand is at work, leading to the right option or at least to the less damaging one.

Take the euro, for instance—an example par excellence of an option imposed from above. In those countries that converted to it, the euro has been a prescription for zero growth, cutting the average citizen's purchasing power by anywhere from one-fifth to a half, depending on whose estimates one uses. By contrast, countries that successfully resisted the euro, like Britain and Sweden, are in good shape. In a fully democratic environment, the hidden hand would long since have stopped the single European currency, or would certainly have radically revised the elaborate and self-defeating regulations sustaining it. In the non-democratic environment of the EU, there has been no recourse.

In order to function, however, democracy must rest on simple, transparent rules—and on popular acceptance of them. The UK has no written constitution, yet the rules—first-past-the-post elections, a sovereign parliament, judicial independence—are well known and deeply rooted in the country's traditions. The U.S. Constitution of 1787 is short, lucid, reassuringly specific and yet usefully vague. The same is true of the well-balanced German Federal Constitution of 1949 and even, despite its many shortcomings, of de Gaulle's French Constitution of 1958. So far, although it boasts 80,000 pages of law, Europe lacks any such widely recognized statement of its purposes, let alone what James Madison elegantly described as "that share of prejudice in its favor which is a salutary aid to the most rational government." The Constitutional Treaty is no improvement.

In the meantime, looming in the background are all of Europe's other crushing problems, from the implosion of its birth rates to the Islamist threat to the stranglehold of sclerotic welfare systems to an entrenched and reflexive anti-Americanism. The French and Dutch votes, together with Britain's postponement of its referendum, have provided a desperately needed opportunity for review. It remains to be seen whether this opportunity can be seized and enlarged upon, whether Europe can walk itself back from its massive, self-inflicted harm toward a federation of sovereign democratic states and continent-wide economic growth. The prospects can hardly be said to be bright.

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How to Think About the Crusades

Daniel Johnson

If there is one thing that everybody knows about the Crusades, it is that they were a Bad Thing. In the eyes even of most Christians, let alone others, the Crusades were a crime against humanity, one for which apologies are due, especially to Muslims. President Bush's early reference to the war on terror as a "crusade" was seen as a catastrophic blunder, justifying the accusations of Osama bin Laden and other Islamists who habitually refer to their enemies as "crusaders," with all the negative connotations the word now possesses.

Condemnation of the Crusades is based on the premise that they were a barbaric, unprovoked war of extermination and conquest, waged against a superior and incomparably more tolerant civilization—in brief, an archetype of Western imperialism. Today, when the very idea of a holy war is utterly alien to Western sensibilities, it is the United States that is identified by its critics, especially in Europe, with the religious fanaticism and military rapacity of the crusaders. The Nobel Prize-winning German novelist Guenter Grass, writing soon after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, decried the "religious fundamentalism," "moral decline," and "organized madness" of the United States, and proposed that Pope John Paul II, "who knows how lasting and devastating the disasters wrought by the mentality and actions of Christian crusaders have been," issue a formal apology to the Muslim world. *Kingdom of Heaven*, the Crusade movie by Ridley Scott released in the spring, reflects many of these same attitudes.

The facts about the Crusades are less familiar than the myths, and bear summarizing briefly. The First Crusade was launched in 1095 to recover Christian control over the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, the traditional location of the resurrection of Jesus, from the Saracens (a name deriving from the Greek term for Muslims and other Orientals). Against all odds, the Crusade succeeded, establishing several states, known as Outremer (literally, "overseas"), which endured for almost two centuries.

"The bloody and incessant battle to defend these isolated satellite settlements against a rising tide of Muslim aggression would change the course of history," writes Thomas Asbridge in *The First Crusade: A New History* (2004). Indeed, since the 18th century, historians have recognized no fewer than seven major Crusades to the Holy Land, the last in 1270. Each of them was a complex affair, sometimes involving several separate expeditions from different parts of Europe.

In 1204, the Fourth Crusade sacked Constantinople and established a Latin empire in the former Byzantine territories. This survived until 1261, when the Greeks reconquered their capital. With the fall of Acre in 1291, the Kingdom of Jerusalem

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retreated to Cyprus, protected by the military orders that had been formed to defend the Holy Land and that now began to build new bastions of Christendom in other Mediterranean islands, such as Rhodes and Malta. The crusading idea did not vanish, but none of the later expeditions that called themselves "Crusades" made any attempt to reach Palestine.

From a modern perspective, the charge sheet against the Crusades is formidable indeed. For Jews in the European Diaspora, the First Crusade was a catastrophe unprecedented since the destruction of the Temple. Three flourishing communities of the Rhineland—Worms, Mainz, and Cologne—were massacred by burghers and crusaders led by a German, Count Emicho of Leinigen, after the charismatic preacher Peter the Hermit had aroused popular hysteria. The frightful memory of these pogroms is preserved in three nearly contemporaneous Hebrew prose narratives, as well as in prayers and dirges that are recited to this day. Nor were these the only crusader persecutions of Jews. When Jerusalem fell in 1099, the Jews of the city were slaughtered along with the Muslims, and there were further assaults during the Second Crusade of 1147.

That Second Crusade, the brainchild of the great religious genius Bernard of Clairvaux, also began a process of widening of the definition of "crusade" to include campaigns against heretics and pagans in other parts of Europe. The Christian reconquest of the Iberian peninsula, which by 1257 had reduced the Moors to the tiny region of Granada, was given the status of a crusade. So, too, was the colonization of the Baltic Slavs, led by the Teutonic Knights, a monastic military order modeled on the Templars and Hospitalers of the Holy Land. Between 1209 and 1229, crusades were mounted against the Albigensian Cathars in southern France, the first of many heretics to be crushed by this means.

Jews, pagans, and heretics were not the only groups to suffer collateral damage from the Crusades. Eastern Orthodox Christians also harbor bitter memories, particularly of the Fourth Crusade, which was diverted from the reconquest of Jerusalem and instead sacked Constantinople in 1204. The Byzantine empire, already in decline, then disintegrated, paving the way for its permanent Islamization and enabling the Ottoman Turks to invade Europe in the 16th century.

The main contemporary charge against the Crusades, however, is that they did irreparable and lasting damage to relations between Muslims and Christians—even that they "explain" the present conflict between Islam and the West. Tens of thousands of Muslims were killed by the crusaders in the establishment of their states, and over the next two centuries there were crusader incursions throughout the Eastern Mediterranean, from Egypt to Mesopotamia.

For the Muslim world, the loss of Jerusalem, largely ignored at the time, came to seem in retrospect a traumatic (if also cathartic) experience. Though other invasions, such as those of the Mongols in the 13th and 14th centuries, were far more destructive of Islamic civilization, the Crusades remain more deeply lodged in Muslim collective memory, no doubt because they have been incorporated into a narrative that provides a rationale for the growing disparity in wealth and power between Islam and the West since the 17th century.

But what have Western historians had to say about the Crusades? In modern times, little good: the dominant narrative derives from the Enlightenment critique, itself a byproduct of the assault on religion in general and on the Catholic Church in particular. Thus, to Edward Gibbon, whose witty and vitriolic account still influences modern historians, the only merit of the Crusades was that they weakened the grip of European feudalism. For the rest, "these holy wars," Gibbon wrote,

> appear to me to have checked rather than forwarded the maturity of Europe. The lives and labors of millions, which were buried in the East, would have been more profitably employed in the improvement of their native country: the accumulated stock of industry and wealth would have overflowed in navigation and trade; and the Latins would have been enriched by a pure and friendly correspondence with the climates of the East.

Some of the most influential modern historians of the Crusades have also seen them through the prism of later European history. A salient example is the late Sir Steven Runciman, whose elegant, three-volume *History of the Crusades* appeared during the 1950's, a period of decolonization in the Middle East as elsewhere.

Runciman empathized with the sophistication of Byzantine civilization, which he blamed the Latins for undermining, and he shared the post-imperial pessimism of the British upper class. He had spent World War II in Istanbul as a professor of Byzantine art, and decided to write about the Crusades—

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a subject he detested—in order to reeducate the British. When he declared that "seen in the perspective of history the whole crusading movement was a fiasco," he was reflecting the *zeitgeist* of the Suez campaign.

A different but no less negative case was that of Carl Erdmann, the brilliant German author of *The Origin of the Idea of the Crusade*. This classic work, which appeared in 1935, was a coded attack on Nazi Germany, and was understood as such by the intended targets: Erdmann found himself excluded from the German universities, was sent to the eastern front, and died there.

Erdmann argued that, in proclaiming the First Crusade, Pope Urban II was less interested in restoring the rights of Christians to make pilgrimages to the Holy Sepulcher than in unleashing "an ecclesiastical-knightly war upon heathens" in collaboration with Emperor Henry IV. For Erdmann, this unholy alliance of pope and Caesar not only signified a betrayal of the gospels but was a portent of Hitler's war of racial extermination. His thesis has certainly impressed later generations; but as Hans Eberhard Mayer, an equally eminent German historian, has pointed out, that does not make it true. Mayer has shown that the march to Jerusalem was intended from the beginning to be a pilgrimage, albeit an armed one, and that this was how Urban II originally conceived it; it was only en route that "the conceptual change from armed pilgrim to soldier for the faith took place."

In any case, the hostile narrative of the Crusades bequeathed by historians from Gibbon to Runciman took deep root in the Western imagination, and has found a powerful echo in popular culture. Of course, the adventures of the crusaders themselves have been the stuff of literature from the troubador Blondel's search for the imprisoned Richard the Lionheart to Torquato Tasso's verse epic *Gerusalemme Liberata* to the romances of Walter Scott and beyond. Today, however, the historical reality of the Crusades has been appropriated by those whose quite specific aim is to discredit the war against Islamist terrorism.

ONE OF these is Ridley Scott. In *Kingdom of Heaven*, the hero Balian of Ibelin (played by Orlando Bloom, rather out of his depth) is a French blacksmith who, by a series of ever more miraculous coincidences, becomes a great crusader lord. (The real Balian was an Italian nobleman born in the Holy Land.) Arriving in Outremer, he discovers on a hill in the middle of Jerusalem, supposed to be Calvary, that he has lost his faith. But in this "New World," he also finds himself at home among a liberal brotherhood of freethinkers who ignore their bigoted anti-Muslim bishop and instead keep the peace with Saladin. Balian is shown colonizing this Wild East frontier, digging a well and sharing his water with the Saracens. For this he is rewarded with the love of the fair Queen Sibylla, sister of King Baldwin IV and wife of King Guy de Lusignan. (In reality, she was happily married and had a child, the future Baldwin V.)

Then there is Saladin himself, the great Kurdish sultan and conqueror of Jerusalem who reunited a Muslim world long divided between rival caliphates, brilliantly and sympathetically portrayed in the movie by the Syrian actor Ghassan Massoud. Ridley Scott here draws on a long tradition, including Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's drama *Nathan the Wise* and Walter Scott's *The Talisman*, in which Saladin was depicted not only as a model of chivalry (as medieval poets and chroniclers had already done) but as a pioneer of religious toleration. The difference is that whereas such literary classics did not pretend to portray the historical Saladin, the makers of *Kingdom of Heaven* claim that "authenticity colored every facet of the production."

Needless to say, there is no evidence to support the film's view of Saladin. Indeed, for Islamists today who dream of Islam's ultimate victory over the Jews and Christians, Saladin is the very model of a warrior, not a prototype UN Secretary General. But the movie insists otherwise, contrasting its idealized image of Saladin with the crusaders, most of whom are bloodthirsty, drunken, scheming, venal, treacherous, and above all fanatical. (Guy de Lusignan and Raymond de Chatillon, in particular, are intended as caricatures of George W. Bush and Donald Rumsfeld, while the unfortunately futile efforts of the peace party are led by Bill Clinton and Colin Powell disguised as Baldwin IV and Tiberias.)

The climax of the film is the siege of Jerusalem. Balian is shown as a democratic hero, knighting citizens of all faiths and none, and fighting so well that Saladin agrees to a negotiated surrender. Balian tells the assembled people that the Holy Sepulcher does not matter; all he wants is to save their lives. The bishop cries "Blasphemy!" but is silenced, and Balian asks Saladin: "What is Jerusalem worth?" The sultan replies "nothing," and then adds, as an afterthought, "everything," thereby proving that at least somebody in this movie is prepared to sacrifice himself for a holy place. Whereupon a disillusioned Balian leaves Outremer to return to France, taking with him Sibylla, now sporting cropped hair.

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In a kind of coda that takes place back at the French smithy, Richard the Lionheart suddenly turns up, on his way to recapture Jerusalem from Saladin. The king wants to take the renowned Balian with him, but a wiser and sadder Balian snubs him, rejecting the opportunity of new glory. By this time the film's ludicrous distortions have reached epic proportions of their own—here is the Lionheart, a genuine Western hero and a match for Saladin, relegated to a bit part while Orlando Bloom settles down to domestic bliss with his ex-queen—and mercifully it all comes to a close.

If works like *Kingdom of Heaven* transform the Crusades into a medieval allegory of today's global confrontation with radical Islam—a very Western allegory, in that it repeats every anti-Western cliché—it is at least heartening to report that in recent years a new school of historians has emerged, free of the resentments and prejudices of previous generations. Outstanding among them are Thomas Asbridge, from whom I have already quoted, and Jonathan Phillips, the author of *The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople* (2004).

Their accounts have justly won a wide readership. Both works are dispassionate in tone, drawing on a wider range of sources than earlier and more partisan historians, and above all paying proper attention to the primarily spiritual forces that propelled these expeditions. Both were published after September 11, 2001; while they are solicitous of Muslim and Greek Orthodox sensibilities, neither finds it necessary to condemn or apologize for the Crusades.

Nor should they. No doubt, as both historians stipulate, the pursuit of land and plunder motivated many crusaders. But materialism, while it looms very large in the conventional narrative of the Crusades, was only a secondary factor; most crusaders sacrificed far more wealth than they gained. According to Asbridge, it cost the equivalent of five times a knight's annual income to pay for his passage and that of his entourage to Jerusalem.

Moreover, spiritual and material motives did not necessarily stand in mutual contradiction. When the crusaders besieged and took the great city of Antioch, and established a principality there on their way to Jerusalem, they believed they were merely restoring the oldest of the patriarchal sees, the site of Peter's first church, to Christendom. In contrast to the long-standing cliché about the crusaders' greed and avarice, or about the predominance among them of land-hungry younger sons, Asbridge argues convincingly that chivalry and religiosity outweighed the hope of material rewards; of those who returned from the First Crusade, "none came home laden down with riches."

The Pope also wanted to harness and channel the violence of the new feudal military class: "Let those who in the past have been accustomed to spread private war so vilely among the faithful advance against the infidels." Modern armies similarly absorb many who would otherwise populate the prisons. But to judge from their own chronicles, the crusaders were hardly ignoble in character, or incapable of impartiality. Archbishop William of Tyre's *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, Geoffrey de Villehardouin's account of the Fourth Crusade, and Jean de Joinville's *Life of St. Louis* are examples of first-hand accounts by important *dramatis personae* that are invaluable to historians and that still read well today.

The Crusades played a major role in the evolution of military strategy, technology, and architecture.* They were also a landmark in the mundane business of feeding unprecedented numbers of troops. On the First Crusade, for much of the time, crusaders starved. As the historian Karl Leyser has written, "At critical moments they did not eat in order to fight, but fought in order to eat." The conquest of Antioch, the key to Jerusalem, was made possible only once they had secured supplies from Italian ships by fortifying the port.

Nor is it true that the numbers of crusaders who settled in Outremer were sufficiently large as to invoke the concept of mass colonization. Perhaps a half-million Europeans participated in the seven Crusades over two centuries, during which time the population of Europe increased by almost 50 percent, from 48 million in 1100 to 69 million in 1250. Battles and sieges during the Crusades did tend to be bloodier than back home in Europe. Even so, however, the human cost of these relatively brief campaigns, punctuated by long periods of peace, must have been negligible as compared with, say, the annihilation of Baghdad by Hulagu's Mongol horde in 1258, which wiped out a city of a half-million and ended the Abbasid Caliphate, or even as compared with the sack of Jerusalem in 1244 by Turkomans fleeing from the Mongols.

The Crusades marked the moment when the West achieved political, economic, aesthetic, and intellectual take-off. Within decades, Europe had

* See Hugh Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (1994), a much more scholarly work than the 1909 dissertation under the same title by T.E. Lawrence (republished in 1988). But at least that dissertation was an honest account of things seen, unlike the claims made later by the charlatan known as Lawrence of Arabia.

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given birth to the rule of law and the modern state, free trade and Magna Carta, the Gothic cathedral and the scholastic university, Aquinas and Dante, a new spirituality and an early renaissance. Individualism, rationalism, empiricism, mysticism: all owe a debt to the revolution unleashed by the Crusades. In economic terms alone, the existence of Outremer brought prosperity to Palestine and Syria such as they had not seen since Roman times—prosperity not only for Christians but for Jews and also for Muslims, as the later decline of these provinces under Turkish rule would sadly demonstrate.

THESE AND other considerations must go into the writing of fair-minded histories of the Crusades, giving due weight to the spiritual energies that made them possible, to the brutality they visited upon Jews and others, and to their consequences, beneficial and otherwise. But it is no less essential to place them within their larger historical context. In that larger perspective, they take their place as a short-lived counteroffensive against another, much lengthier, and much more relentless holy war—namely, the Muslim jihad against Christendom. For the fact is that whereas the Crusades were a temporary phenomenon that flourished for some two centuries and had quite limited purposes, jihad is and has been a permanent and ubiquitous fact of Islamic life.

Jihad evolved into a doctrine of Islamic jurisprudence as a byproduct of the great Arab expansion after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, thus predating the First Crusade by more than four centuries. Muslim scholars were well aware of the uniqueness of this institution. Ibn Khaldun, the greatest of all Islamic historians and a key witness from the period just after the Crusades, compares Islam with Christianity and Judaism in this respect:

> In the Muslim community, the holy war is a religious duty, because of the universalism of the Muslim mission and the obligation to convert everybody to Islam either by persuasion or force. . . . The other religious groups did not have a universal mission, and the holy war was not a religious duty to them, save only for purposes of defense.*

Many western scholars have utterly failed to grasp the significance of this distinction. They are convinced that Islam was "tolerant, religiously quasi-indifferent," as the preeminent French historian Fernand Braudel declared, whereas Christianity was "brutal, violent, relentless, often under the sign of absolute intolerance." In point of fact, Muslim rulers varied greatly in their treatment of their Christian and Jewish subjects, who were permitted to exist under Islamic law only in the inferior legal status of *dhimmi*, suffering numerous penalties and often falling victim to persecutions that were no less brutal, violent, and relentless than those of Christian Europe. In the meantime, the larger Islamic jihad against Christendom went on unabated.

The spectacular Arab conquests of the 7th and 8th centuries had brought under the Crescent the Greco-Roman heartlands of Christianity along the southern coast of the Mediterranean, with many incursions northward as well. Some territory was eventually recovered from the Saracens between the 10th and 12th centuries, including much of Spain, southern France, Italy, Sicily, and Cyprus. But Roman Africa and the Hellenic Levant were lost forever, while the Byzantines lost Anatolia to the Turks after their decisive defeat at Manzikert in 1071.

So the Crusades took place against a background of Muslim conquest, of which the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem were deliberately triumphal symbols. Compared with the three phases of jihad against Christendom—Arab, Tartar, and Turkish—lasting over a millennium and stretching across three continents, the seven Frankish expeditions to Palestine can be seen in proportion: a "limited and belated response," as Bernard Lewis puts it, a brief if important interlude in the long history of jihad. In this context, it is not so surprising that at the time, as Lewis reminds us, the Muslims "knew little and cared less" about the crusaders. The turning point in relations between Islam and the West came only much later, at the end of the 17th century, when the long Turkish retreat, beginning with the siege of Vienna, finally forced the Ottoman Sultans to come to terms.

The Crusades were also a belated response to specific humiliations, stretching back over centuries. These included the partial destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher by the Caliph Hakim in 1009. The sermon preached by Urban II at the Council of Clermont in 1095, which electrified Latin Christendom, justified its call to arms against the Saracens by atrocities against Christian pilgrims that were largely specious. But Christians in general had cause to feel threatened: Saracen pirates had pillaged Rome itself in 845, and their base in Sicily had only been recaptured four years before the First Crusade. Likewise, the Fourth Crusade turned on the Greeks, who in the Third

* *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, translated by Franz Rosenthal, edited and abridged by N.J. Dawood (1967).

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Crusade had allied themselves with Saladin, as an explosion of vengeance by Venetians and other Latins. The sack of Constantinople cannot be justified, but it was not unprovoked.

Did the Crusades nevertheless poison relations between Islam and the West? It is true that Urban dehumanized Muslims as "a race utterly alien to God." But what proved more significant in the long term was that the Crusades, having established trading and pilgrim routes to Outremer, obliged the Franks to acquaint themselves with Islamic culture, just as the Normans did in Saracen Sicily and the Spanish and Portuguese in Moorish Iberia. Emperor Frederick II, whose native milieu had been marked by the Muslim presence, incurred the displeasure of the pious by cultivating Arab architecture, science, and philosophy; when in 1228 he finally obeyed the papal command to recover Jerusalem, he succeeded in doing so by negotiation, without a drop of blood being spilled. In the Middle East, co-existence between crusader and Saracen remained possible at least until the external threat of Mongol conquest radicalized Islam and brought about the rise of the Mameluke Turks, who systematically exterminated the Templars and Hospitalers on whom Outremer depended.

This legacy was not lost when the crusader states were snuffed out. The literature of medieval Europe acknowledges Muslim heroes like Saladin, and thinkers like Averroes and Avicenna, on equal terms with Christians; for Dante, Saracens, too, belong to the *humana civilitas*. In the great humanist Nicholas of Cusa, undoubtedly influenced by the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453, we encounter an attempt to interpret the Qur'an as a sacred text worthy of serious consideration. In later centuries, the intense and ongoing interest of Westerners in Islamic culture and religion is too well known to need repeating.

Ever since al Qaeda declared war on the West, the Crusades have been forced back into our consciousness as part of a longer historical narrative weighted heavily in favor of Islam. The radical Islamist invocation of the Crusades serves two purposes: to rally Muslims to the cause of jihad against Judeo-Christian civilization, and to undermine the legitimacy of resistance to it. Islamists know exactly how to exploit post-imperial, post-Christian guilt—the West's Achilles' heel. By placing the Crusades at the heart of the relationship between Islam and the West, they intend their war of terror to be seen by both sides as a justifiable response to Western aggression. In this they have not been disappointed, as we can witness all around us.

According to Islamist historiography, for example, the modern state of Israel is merely a reincarnation of the medieval Kingdom of Jerusalem, and Zionism the modern manifestation of the same imperialistic impulse as that which drove the Crusades. The fact that it took a divided Islam two centuries in order to defeat and expel the crusaders from the Levant provides a pattern for the present situation. True, Western "imperialism" has established itself not only in Israel but, most recently, in Iraq and Afghanistan, but Islamists are enjoined by the example of their forebears who fought the crusaders to be patient and cunning, to unite against the common foe, and to be utterly ruthless.

When Westerners today condemn the Crusades, they send a coded message both to Israel and to the Muslim world. The message says that just as these Westerners, and especially the Christians among them, are not ready to defend their own ancestors, so they are unprepared to lift a finger to defend the Jewish state, still less to defend the invasion and occupation of Iraq. European Christians, certainly, are indeed more likely to be found siding with Muslims, whether Palestinians or Iraqis, than with Sharon or Bush. So are European elites in general, not to speak of many American academics, intellectuals, and spokesmen for "mainline" churches. The reasons in all cases are various, but one large cluster of them, if traced back far enough, is connected with a false, partisan, and self-hating interpretation of the Crusades.

An obscure branch of medieval history may not sound like promising or even especially important territory for public debate. But unless and until the Crusades are reclaimed by scholarship, and interpreted objectively for popular consumption, there is a real danger that the al-Qaeda school of historiography (as we may call it) will triumph. In the reflexively anti-Israel and anti-American attitudes of many Europeans, in mindless celebrations of a movie like *Kingdom of Heaven*—"courageously relevant," says the *Seattle Intelligencer*; "full of astonishments, not the least of which are its ideas," chimes in the *Washington Post*—it already has.

The Crusades are an organic part of Western history. They are also a *casus belli*, and will remain so for as long as it suits the Islamists. On the cultural front of that war, one side has gone disastrously far in the direction of unilateral disarmament.

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What Happened to the Movies?

Joseph Epstein

I WROTE a movie once. A man from a television production firm connected with Warner Brothers called one day to say that he wished to take an option on two stories of mine that had appeared in COMMENTARY, and wondered if I would like to write a screenplay uniting the two. He did not have much money to offer, he said. At the time, the minimum fee for a screenplay by a member of the Screenwriters Guild was $57,500, and he could pay me that, along with my option money.

I told him I'd like the weekend to think about it, hung up the phone, and on the spot did an elaborate and extended touchdown dance. A week later, I wrote a check for $1,000, taking out a membership in the Screenwriters Guild. In another few weeks, thick contracts arrived from Warner Brothers. I was a screenwriter.

I would like to be able to report now on the monstrous vulgarity of the producer who contacted me: how he wanted me to write into the script all manner of fancy fornication, to make the family dog a lesbian, and to add more touches along the same lines. None of this occurred. He was a bright and earnest man, helpful in every way. I, truth to tell, was less than a dab hand at screenwriting. When, without realizing it, I set three scenes in a row over lunch in different restaurants, my producer said to me, very gently, "It's called a *movie*, Joe, so couldn't we have the characters move around a little?"

One day he asked if I knew how lucky I was. "You write something," he said. "You make it as good as you can. You send it to a publisher or a magazine editor. Either they take it or they don't—and in your case they mostly do—and that's the end of it. I, on the other hand, have to go through endless committees, deal with countless fools and con artists, and little of what I want to do ever gets done."

As I sent him bits of my screenplay, my producer would say encouraging things like, "this could be a splendid little movie"; "I see a really fine little movie emerging here"; "great little movie you're turning out." Always that word "little" popped up.

"You know," he said one day, "this could be a major movie."

"What happened to 'little'?" I asked. "How did we suddenly become 'major'? I don't recall writing in a part for Buddha or Moses."

"Oh," he said, "as the script is developing I can now see a part for Dustin Hoffman." What would that mean?, I asked in my ignorance. "As things stand," he explained, "we have here maybe a $20-million movie. If Dustin Hoffman is in it, it becomes at least a $60- or $70-million movie. For example, you now have a scene set in 1960 in the Pump Room at the Ambassador East Hotel. If we're talking about a $20-million movie, we'll duplicate the livery of the waiters, we'll find the same

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banquettes and menus, and we'll get a neon sign that reads 'Pump Room.' But if it's a $70-million movie, we'll rebuild the goddamn Pump Room."

With this, Irving Berlin's line about no business like show business took on newly vivid meaning.

I finished my screenplay and got my money, but before anything further happened my producer was fired and the project died. If the movie had been made, I would have received another $100,000 and a share of any net profits—also known among screenwriters, I was told, as *nyet* profits, since, thanks to creative Hollywood accounting, a net profit has yet to be shown on *Gone With the Wind*.

I didn't feel much bothered that the project died. In his novel *The Red White and Blue*, John Gregory Dunne has a Hollywood producer dividing all the scripts sent to him into two categories: "piece of shit" and "not a piece of shit." I'm not sure into which category mine would have fallen; I've never gone back to reread it, and have no interest in doing so now.

The best deal of all for a writer, it has been said, is to sell his book to the movies for $1 million, and then they never make the movie. Sounds right to me. Somehow I never felt the screenplay I'd written was quite mine, even though I had written every word of it and it drew loosely on my stories. I wrote it, but did not sense that I really owned it, and I had put up no fight at all when asked to make extensive changes. I once heard David Mamet say, about the screenplay he had written for the movie *The Untouchables*, that he felt toward it like an aunt toward a nephew: "I love it, but it's not really my child."

The role of ownership plays a large part in David Thomson's *The Whole Equation*,* a remarkable book by the English-born movie historian and critic best known for his *A Biographical Dictionary of Film* (1975), now in its fourth updated edition as *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film* (2002). Thomson believes you cannot control and finally perhaps not even love what you do not own, and very few screenwriters—or directors—own the movies they make. Nor, significantly, are they ready to put up their own money to see them made. While he blames the awfulness of most contemporary movies on the ignorance and cynicism of producers and Hollywood studio executives, he sweeps much wider in his search for the reasons why movies in general seem so much less good than they ought to be—and for the key to the mystery of his own and everyone else's enchantment with them.

Impressive in its comprehensiveness, *The Whole Equation* includes just about everything known about the movies, except the color of the dishes (periwinkle blue) my mother brought home from the 400 Theater during World War II and the name of the Greek family (I don't know it, either) who ran the candy shop next door, from which I bought popcorn for a nickel cheaper and with more butter than was available at the Nortown Theater, where small light bulbs simulating stars flickered on and off in the blue ceiling.

Eschewing chronology, Thomson proceeds more or less thematically. In *The Whole Equation* you will find chapters or extended passages on the changes in movie distribution; on the effects of technological change (Thomson thinks sound a great advance, paradoxically allowing actors to be silent, but is less charitable toward color, which destroyed the interesting effects of the play of light made possible by black-and-white film); on the role of fantasy and the voyeuristic impulse in audiences; on the trajectory of movie careers, complete with numerous examples; on the issue of censorship and politics in the movie industry ("Actors," Thomson writes, "are not trained to take responsibility for what they say. That's why politics eats them up"); on the significance of the industry's being located in southern California, with its sunshine and lack of urban tradition; on studio dealings with unions and gangsters; on how the old studio system was born and flourished, and the role of talent agents in killing it; and on much else besides.

Throughout Thomson is digressive, idiosyncratic, cranky, quirky, heterodox, gossipy (did you know that Humphrey Bogart wore a toupée?). He does go on, but over the course of this book's nearly 400 pages one rarely wants to say, with John Wayne-like impatience, "OK, kid, let's get the cows to Abilene." Reading *The Whole Equation* resembles nothing so much as being talked to nonstop by a breathless, slightly overdramatizing, but extremely intelligent man, who really does know what he's talking about. "You can take Hollywood for granted like I did," Cecelia Brady, a character in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Last Tycoon*, says on that novel's first page, "or you can dismiss it with the contempt we reserve for what we don't understand. It can be understood too, but only dimly and in flashes. Not half a dozen men have ever been able to keep the whole equation of pictures in their heads."

Borrowing her thought for his title, David Thomson clearly wrote *The Whole Equation* in the hope of becoming one of the half-dozen. Even if in

* Knopf, 416 pp., $27.95.

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the end he does not quite bring it all off, along the way he has produced a work of vast information and considerable brilliance.

OF ALL the issues Thomson deals with, perhaps the most interesting is the connection between art and profit, or between what he describes dryly as "the urge to tell . . . stories" and "the wish to make money," adding that the "passion in the [whole] equation is to convince you that the two are one." Thomson understands that, for all their power, the movies cannot compete with literature as an art. When literature is operating at a high level as, in Lionel Trilling's words, "the human activity that takes the fullest and most precise account of variousness, possibility, complexity, and difficulty," they cannot even come close.

Comparing, for example, the 2002 movie made from Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours* to Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, on which both the movie and the Cunningham novel are partly based, Thomson "cannot hold back the realization that the movies have never been good enough." As a form, he writes, movies are "most acute when fixed on what happens next; whereas literature, sooner or later, is about the meaning behind events." This explains better than anything else I know why it is that the finest movies seem to have been made not from first- but from second-rate fiction: *The Maltese Falcon* (Dashiell Hammett), *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (James M. Cain), *Farewell My Lovely* (Raymond Chandler), *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (B. Traven). In all these books, plot takes primacy over style and penetrating observation.

Which brings us to screenwriters. "Product," the old Hollywood moguls used to call the movies they made. Most of them were main-chance Jewish operator types who ran their studios on the factory model. They were aware that the right actors and actresses were crucial and were what people paid their money to see. Directors who knew how to get the best out of these actors were also important, as were producers with a talent for organization and for keeping all these temperamental characters in line. But without writers there was nothing; the game could not even begin until writers had put the ball in play.

And yet writers, as everyone knows, have always been thought the most dispensable element in the Hollywood equation. "You heard about the ambitious Polish starlet who, hoping to advance her movie career, slept with a screenwriter?" An old joke, but one that nicely describes the powerless state of the Hollywood writer. Powerless, perhaps, with good reason.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, broke, out of print, and out of luck, with a wife in an insane asylum and a drinking problem as big as the Ritz, came to Hollywood as a screenwriter in 1927 in the hope that its money might bail him out. It did not. In 1940, at the age of forty-four, he died of a heart attack, perhaps partially brought on by a broken heart, in an apartment on Hayworth Avenue off Sunset Boulevard.

From all reports, Fitzgerald was treated respectfully in Hollywood—and paid decently, too. But he could not give them quite what they wanted, and he never succeeded there. In *The Last Tycoon*, Fitzgerald gives ample evidence not only that he thoroughly understood the Hollywood system as it then operated—the magnificence of it, and the nightmare, too—but why he himself failed in it.

The novel, unfinished at Fitzgerald's death, is a *roman à clef* about the career of the super-producer Irving Thalberg. David Thomson agrees with Fitzgerald's high estimate of Thalberg, writing that he was "inspired by an urge to lift the picture business from its grubby origins and to bring it closer to the standard of the legitimate theater." But it was Thalberg who installed the system under which writers were employed in the old Hollywood. In the words of Fitzgerald's Thalberg character, Monroe Stahr, "writers are children—even in normal times they can't keep their minds on their work"; they "poop out and get all mixed up and someone has to come and straighten them out." Thalberg invented the notion of putting several different writers on a project, sometimes simultaneously and occasionally even unbeknownst to one another. Necessary though they were, writers were also replaceable, rather like supremely well-paid office temps.

"I never thought," Fitzgerald has his Thalberg character say, "that I had more brains than a writer has. But I always thought that his brains belonged to me—because I knew how to use them." It is far from clear that Fitzgerald disagreed with this. (I don't believe I do, either.) He was probably also in agreement with this sentiment of Stahr/Thalberg: "We don't have good writers out here. . . . Oh, we hire them but when they get out here they're not good writers—so we have to work with the material we have."

WOULD DANIEL FUCHS, a professional screenwriter, have disagreed? The author of a trilogy of New York novels that flopped commercially when first published in the mid-1930's (but were re-

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published to great acclaim in 1961), Fuchs left a job as a $6-a-day substitute teacher in Brooklyn to write for the movies. Arriving in Hollywood in 1937, he remained there until his death in 1993, during which time he acquired only twelve screen credits. One among them, *Love Me or Leave Me* (1955), won an Oscar, though Fuchs, a modest man, believed this owed as much to James Cagney's performance as to the words he had provided for him.

Fuchs's thoughts on the movies can be consulted in a handsome new collection of his work, *The Golden West: Hollywood Stories*.* Never an astronomically well-paid writer, he claims that at the height of his career he did not make much over $60,000 a year. In an interesting anecdote, he tells about being assigned to a picture and finally figuring out the problems of its complicated story, only to be replaced because the producer thought him too low-priced for the job. This struck a chord with me. Asked once by a famous producer to work on someone else's screenplay, I said that I could arrange to do it, that it would take three or so weeks of my time, and that I would charge $25,000. Nothing ever came of it. When I told this story to Frederic Raphael, who wrote the screenplays for *Darling*, *Two for the Road*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *Eyes Wide Shut*, and other movies, he responded that the producer probably thought me a peon; I should have asked for $25,000 per week.

Having chosen a Hollywood life, Daniel Fuchs seems to have had few regrets. He raised his sons safely and lived comfortably among beautiful landscapes. "*Nothing is given freely*," he writes, supplying his own emphasis; "*payment is exacted*." In his case, in exchange "for the boon of work; for the joy of leisure, the happy, lazy days; for the castles and the drowsy back lots; for the stalwarts I've come to know; . . . for . . . the flowers, the sycamores, the blessings of the sun," he gave up such art as was at his command. Did he make a terrible deal, a pact with the devil? He appears never to have thought so.

Edmund Wilson used to say that the two great enemies of literary talent in the United States were Hollywood and Henry Luce. Today this rings rather hollow. My guess is that the people who cashed in their chips for better money in movies or journalism were not holding very high artistic cards to begin with. Few must be the great works that never appeared because someone was turning out journalism or movies for a mass audience.

By contrast, the ever-modest Fuchs offers a generally high assessment of Hollywood itself. In "Writing for the Movies," published in the February 1962 issue of COMMENTARY and included in *The Golden West*, he asked if it was really fitting, in the name of highbrow snobbery, "to pass by so indifferently the work of [Hollywood directors and producers like] Ford, Stevens, Wilder, Mankiewicz, Huston, Zinneman, William Wellman, Howard Hawks, Sam Wood, Clarence Brown, Victor Fleming, William Van Dyke, King Vidor, Raoul Walsh, Henry Hathaway, Henry King, Chaplin, Lubitsch, Goldwyn, Selznick, Milestone, Capra, Wyler, Cukor, Kazan?" The accomplishments of these men, he argued, had had a world-wide effect, and their achievement was of a magnitude equal to that of the best American architects and inventors. "Generations to come, looking back over the years, are bound to find that the best, most solid creative effort of our decades was spent in the movies, and it's time someone came clean and said so."

DAVID THOMSON is not that someone. Thomson does not hesitate to give the names of movies he admires—and he likes rather a lot of them—but he nonetheless sees in the world of movies a moral drama between art and profit in which art generally goes down to defeat. If, for him, people in Hollywood have not quite sold out, the giant infusions of money to actors and big-name directors, who currently share in a movie's gross profits, mean at least that they have been bought out. Jack Nicholson, for example, now probably a $20-million-a-movie man, is unlikely to make the better sorts of movies on which he acquired his reputation: *Five Easy Pieces*, *King of Marvin Gardens*, and others. The worse Marlon Brando's acting became, Thomson notes, the higher the salary he could command: $5 million, late in life, for ten minutes on film in *Christopher Columbus—The Discovery*.

Thomson does not like the direction in which contemporary movies are going. "I regret," he writes, "the way America has elected to make films for its bluntest section of society and in ways that flatter them, and we have to recognize how much of that is being done for money." He adds that "much in American films supports the worst views held of us in other parts of the world: that we are combat-ready, aggressive, adolescent, greedy, sensationalist, without humor, depth, or imagination, rampant devotees of technology (as opposed to enlightenment)."

As this suggests, Thomson's politics are fairly standard liberal. But that is not the same thing as

* Selected by Christopher Carduff, introduction by John Updike. Black Sparrow/Godine, 272 pp., $24.95.

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standard Hollywood liberal—if only because his critical sense generally rises above his politics. (He says flat-out, for example, that *Easy Rider*, that quintessential hippie movie so much admired by the counterculture, is drivel.) Although he is especially partial to *noir* films, what Thomson longs for above all is a return to movies for adults. Good movies do still get made, but for Thomson we are long past the point (which he places in the 1970's) when a good movie was the exception that proved the rule.

"That's All Folks," the tag line at the end of the old Looney Tunes and Merry Melodies cartoons, is the sad and pessimistic title of Thomson's final chapter. Although he is not quite announcing the death of the medium, he does sense its deadening, its loss of the magic that the best movies of his (and my) youth had in such seemingly ample supply. And although he allows that he does not know where movies are headed, he suspects "technology will lead the way."

IN *The Big Picture*, Edward Jay Epstein corroborates Thomson's suspicions.* A journalist with a strong taste for the inside story, Epstein takes up marketing trends and other financial questions that affect the movie industry in the 21st century. In clear prose, he fills in much of the story that David Thomson sketches but may not have had the heart to complete. *The Big Picture* might as easily have been titled *The Dark Picture*.

As both Thomson and Epstein relate, the latter in careful and elaborate detail, the production of movies has grown more and more expensive. Thanks to complex deal-making, the better directors and higher-priced actors now work less often but for much more money. Whereas under the studio system Hollywood turned out between 500 and 700 movies a year, the number currently is closer to 200. Agents have played a large role here: of Lew Wasserman, who came near to controlling Hollywood movie production by forcing up salaries for actors and directors and getting them share-in-the-gross deals, it was said that he took the show out of show business.

With the biggest-named actors earning between $20 and $30 million a movie, the average price for turning out a film today is said to be $63.8 million—a rise in cost proportionally greater even than the rise over the years in ticket prices. No wonder, then, that going to the movies is being supplanted by watching movies at home, now my own passive pleasure of choice. And hardly mine alone: during the second half of the 1940's, when the population of the United States was 151 million, more than 90 million people went to the movies every week; today the population of the country is 295 million, but only 25 million people attend weekly, and the chief income from movies no longer derives from ticket sales at the box office.

Epstein shows how the super-corporations—Viacom, Disney, News Corporation, Time Warner, General Electric—now own what remains of the old Hollywood studios. Running them with an eye toward a global audience, they concentrate on objectives that supersede the idea of making entertaining flicks that can both turn a profit and every so often aspire to quasi-art. Their main production model was discovered long ago by Walt Disney: find a niche audience (children, in Disney's case) and be astute about licensing the rights to toys, books, cartoons, and other products that spin off the original movie. George Lucas's *Star Wars* has acted on that model, and created an empire that has struck back again and again—struck the cash register, that is—through lucrative licensing agreements.

Globalism, whatever else may be said for it, also means lowest-common-denominatorism, and technology plays right into it. "With the geometric increases in computer power that will be available to Hollywood in the near future," writes Epstein, "much, if not all, of conventional moviemaking [will be] increasingly replaced by digital animation." Besides, the global market turns out to be largely the youth, or adolescent, market, and that market, brought up on cartoons, comic books, television, and Nintendo games, is much more interested in spectacle than story, in car crashes than catharsis.

For those of us brought up instead on the movies, who in our childhood went to Saturday-afternoon double features without inquiring into what was playing, and rarely came away disappointed, movies have been an entertainment, a mass medium, a purveyor of ideology, a part of our education, sometimes an art, but above all a habit. That habit is now becoming more and more difficult to feed. True, thanks to DVD, one can live off older movies while hoping against hope that the odd new one, domestic or foreign, will somehow slip through the mesh—as still occasionally happens. But one also awaits the day when some evil genius finds a way to turn *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, *Double Indemnity*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, and other beloved old movies into so many animated cartoons.

* Random House, 416 pp., $25.95.

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OBSERVATIONS

Eichmann: The Simplicity of Evil

Hillel Halkin

THE 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann, writes the American scholar Alan Mintz, was "pivotal" in turning the Holocaust from "a topic barely spoken of in public discourse" into "one of the dominant subjects of our time." These words appear in Mintz's introduction to *Facing the Glass Booth*, a collection of contemporaneous newspaper coverage of the trial by the Israeli poet and journalist Haim Gouri.* Translated into English four decades after its appearance in Hebrew in 1962, Gouri's book now joins a small shelf of English-language volumes about this event, of which the most important remains Hannah Arendt's controversial *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963).

Indeed, from now on it will be mandatory for anyone interested in the Eichmann trial to read these two books together, since they both complement and clash with each other strikingly. Arendt and Gouri were two highly perceptive observers who sat through the trial's many months while writing about it for the publications that commissioned them: Arendt for the *New Yorker*, Gouri for the moderately left-wing Hebrew daily, *Lamerhav*.

Yet in temperament, outlook, and identity, the two could hardly have been more opposed. Arendt, the German-Jewish intellectual and author of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, was coolly cerebral; Gouri, a prominent literary figure of the so-called "Palmach generation" that came of age around the time of Israel's 1948 war of independence, was a man of strong emotion. Arendt conceived of herself as a loner, philosophically above the fray; Gouri was socially and politically *engagé*. And whereas Arendt disclaimed any Jewish allegiances and was not especially well-disposed toward Israel, Gouri was Jewish and Israeli to the core. Between them they represented, as the Israeli historian Anita Shapira somewhat hyperbolically put it in a 2002 article juxtaposing them, "two different Jewish civilizations."

Each, certainly, saw the trial through a different prism. Arendt concentrated on Eichmann. For her, as Shapira observes, he illustrated the thesis that totalitarian states depend on vast bureaucracies in which unexceptional men and women, working at desks and in offices, are routinely transformed into participants in exceptional crimes. Eichmann's apparent normality as conveyed by his behavior and responses in the courtroom—"everyone could see that [he] was not a 'monster,'" Arendt said of this man who was one of the senior officials entrusted with implementing the Third Reich's extermination of the Jews—was the whole shocking point of the proceedings, what made them "no ordinary trial." For his role in sending large numbers of Jews to their deaths, mainly by overseeing the transports that delivered them to the concentration camps, Eichmann was clearly guilty. But for Arendt, legal relevance aside,

> it was of great political interest to know how long it takes an average person to overcome his innate repugnance toward crime,

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* Translated by Michael Swirsky. Introduction by Alan Mintz. Wayne State University Press, 337 pp., $24.95 (paperback).

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and what exactly happens to him once he has reached that point. To this question, the case of Adolf Eichmann supplied an answer that could not have been clearer and more precise.

While full of praise for Eichmann's three Israeli judges, whose conduct she considered exemplary, Arendt was highly critical of the prosecutor, Gideon Hausner, for carrying out, at the behest of his "*invisible stage manager*" Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, a "show trial" meant to educate the world and the Israeli public about the Holocaust. The prosecution's case, she wrote, was built on "what the Jews had suffered, not on what Eichmann had done," and irrelevant witness after witness was called to testify to events with which Eichmann had little or no connection.* Not only, in Arendt's opinion, did this detract from the trial's legitimacy, whose only goal should have been "the question of individual guilt or innocence," it also blurred its real lesson—namely, that a man who "*never realized what he was doing*" [the emphasis is hers] could have become, by a process of "sheer thoughtlessness" that wreaked "more havoc than all the evil instincts taken together," one of the "greatest criminals of [his] period."

YET "WHAT the Jews had suffered" was precisely what riveted Gouri. Having worked as a Hagana emissary with Jewish "displaced persons" in Europe in 1947-48 (about which he later wrote a novel called *The Chocolate Deal*), he came to the Eichmann trial with a more intimate knowledge of the Holocaust than that of most native-born Israelis. Nevertheless, the proceedings were an eye-opening and emotionally shattering experience for him.

In large measure this was because, when Eichmann was tried in 1961, the personal stories of the hundreds of thousands of Holocaust survivors in Israel and elsewhere had barely begun to be told. The basic facts were of course well-known—so many European Jews murdered, so many communities destroyed, et cetera. But a combination of trauma, grief, shame, the desire to forget, the fear of being blamed for not resisting, even the fear of not being believed—a common reaction after the war was that the survivors must be exaggerating, or mixing fact with post-traumatic fantasy—kept those who had been through the Holocaust from talking about it even to friends, spouses, and children. The trial, Gouri wrote, gave back to its witnesses "what their murderers had taken from them: the right to tell their stories in the first person singular."

The prosecution's 111 witnesses were chosen (it was this that Arendt complained about) as representative narrators who would present a mosaic of the Holocaust both chronologically and geographically, starting with the rise of Nazism in Germany and ending with Auschwitz. As Gouri listened to their testimonies, some pouring out as from a burst dam, others painfully wrenched from them, he found himself reevaluating many things.

Were the Jews of Europe, for instance, at fault for having gone to their deaths passively, like "sheep to the slaughter," as Gouri's generation, which took up arms to create a Jewish state, had been taught to believe? "We must ask the forgiveness of the multitudes whom we have judged in our hearts, we who were outside that circle," he now wrote in *Lamerhav*, understanding for the first time how mistaken it was to expect resistance from people reduced to shells of themselves

> by prolonged hunger; by the exhaustion that wastes and slows one down; by the fear surpassing all fear; by the enervating illusion of "perhaps, in spite of everything"; by the flicker of "it can't happen"; by the bulldogs on every side; by the loaded Schmeisser at one's back; by weaker relatives hanging on one's arm and neck; by the responsibility for hostages . . . by the foreignness of the landscape; by the lack of a "city of refuge"; by the weariness that wants it all to be over, come what may; by the sense of being abandoned to one's fate without anyone else uttering a peep of protest.

And what about the proud, free Jews of Palestine? They too—and with far less excuse—had done pitifully little. "In May 1943, we knew that Jewish Warsaw was no longer. . . . We knew that the Jewish tribe in Europe was coming closer to extinction with each passing day." Yet life in Tel Aviv and Haifa had gone on peacefully. "Why didn't you [do more to] reveal the truth?" Gouri asked himself and his readers:

> Why didn't you sound the alarm? Why didn't you demonstrate? Why didn't you fast? Why didn't you drive the world mad? What answer can you give? Can you honestly say you did what you could to help?

The sheer amount of detail, of horror, overwhelmed him. If this was what 111 stories were like, imagine 6 million:

> I must apologize. Like most people, I do not grasp the infinite. How, then, can I express it in a way that will be intelligible to others. . . . We who managed to go on living by turning the extermination into some sort of abstraction or symbol . . . in order to avoid the shock and speechlessness of a face-to-face encounter with the victims as individuals, we have been forced this time to confront the totality the hard way.

GOURI DIFFERED with Arendt on the subject of Eichmann, too. It was true, he wrote on the first day of the

* Which did not prevent her from digressing, rather "irrelevantly" herself, on how Europe's Jewish leadership was to blame for collaborating with the Nazis in rounding up Jews and sending them to their deaths.

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defendant's taking the witness stand in his specially constructed, bullet-proof glass booth, that "the man who has just sworn by Almighty God is not mad, or so the doctors, after examining him thoroughly, have determined." It was "terribly difficult" to connect Eichmann's innocuous appearance with "deportations, transports, trains, hunger, beatings, shootings, gas chambers, and the smoke of burning corpses." Yet Gouri did not, like Arendt, therefore deem Eichmann a "clown" whose "inability to speak was closely connected with his inability to think."

On the contrary, he was impressed by Eichmann's "amazingly quick mind" and "verbal eloquence [that] the obtuse usually do not command," and considered him too complex "to sum up with hackneyed terms like 'minor bureaucrat,' 'filthy murderer,' 'liar,' 'hypocrite,' 'cynic,' 'coward,' 'murderously aggressive simpleton,' or 'schizoid.'" In the final analysis, he wrote, Eichmann remained "an unsolved riddle"—to which he added cryptically, in one of the few sentences of his reportage whose meaning is not immediately apparent: "Perhaps because things are simpler than we think."

ONCE IT was determined that Eichmann was sane and mentally fit to stand trial, his personality was just what Arendt said it was: of no legal relevance, but of great political, psychological, and even philosophical interest.

Eichmann was not, of course, the first high Nazi official to be brought to justice. The 1945-49 Nuremberg trials had judged and condemned to death men like Rudolph Hess and Hermann Goering, who were higher up in the Nazi hierarchy than Eichmann. Yet Nuremberg's opening phase involved trying 22 top-ranking Nazis in a scant six months, the same amount of time that the court in Jerusalem would devote to Eichmann alone, and Nuremberg dealt with the Holocaust as just one aspect of German "war crimes."

Moreover, the fact that he was, unlike Hess or Goering, in the second echelon of Nazi officials made Eichmann's case more germane to the question of how the Holocaust could have happened. He was not a man who had accompanied Hitler in seizing and consolidating National Socialist power and to whom could be automatically attributed ideological fervor, fanatical anti-Semitism, or a ruthless drive for power. Rather, he had casually joined the Nazi party on the eve of its takeover in 1932 and risen gradually through the ranks of the SS, gaining his promotions through a combination of hard work, loyalty to his superiors, and administrative skill. Nothing in his previous history suggested a murderous attitude toward Jews. Indeed, as he argued at his trial with some supporting evidence, having worked as a Nazi functionary in the 1930's in the encouragement of Jewish emigration, he may have continued even in the early war years to prefer it to extermination as a solution for Germany's and Europe's "Jewish problem."

It was this that allowed Arendt to depict Eichmann as a mindless bureaucrat who willingly took part in annihilating Jews only because everyone around him was doing it, too, and who was therefore a paradigm for the average German enlisted by the Nazi killing machine. In answer to the question of how?—how could tens of thousands of ordinary people turn into mass murderers while millions of others watched with approval or indifference?—Arendt answered: look at Eichmann. The most frightening thing about totalitarian societies like Nazi Germany was their ability to crush not only all physical but all mental opposition, so that someone who was not a criminal type by nature could with good conscience have sent Jews by the trainload to Auschwitz. Given the "right" environment, almost anyone could have been made to do the same.

This was not, of course, the point of view of the prosecution, which sought to portray Eichmann as a "wild beast" who, as Gideon Hausner put it, would have "gladly leap[ed] into his own grave if he were told that 5 million Jews had been exterminated." But neither in Arendt's nor in Gouri's account of Eichmann's testimony, the former confidently knowing in its analysis, the latter puzzled and perturbed, does this beast make even a moment's appearance. Both writers described the defendant—studiously attentive to the proceedings, deferential and polite to his judges, almost eagerly cooperative in answering the questions put to him while standing erect in his dark suit and thick-framed glasses—as though he were an accountant testifying in corporate litigation. The only unusual thing about him was an occasional facial contortion that Arendt referred to as a "nervous tic" and Gouri as his "familiar twitch."

RECENTLY, I spent several hours pondering this tic or twitch while viewing a little-known 1999 documentary film, *The Specialist*, that was made from the original video footage of the Eichmann trial by an Israeli cinematographer named Eyal Sivan.* Little of this footage had ever been made public before, and Sivan's film offers a rare opportunity to see some of it.

Though criticized for tendentious editing that presents Eichmann, in the spirit of Arendt's book, as a mere bureaucratic cog (Sivan has in fact acknowledged *Eichmann in Jerusalem* as his inspiration), *The Specialist* shows a defendant who, viewed 40 years later, resembles Gouri's version of him more than Arendt's. Far from seeming mindless, he strikes one as impressively capable of analyzing what he is

* The two-hour video, made with co-writer Rony Brauman, is available with English subtitles on DVD (Home Vision).

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asked; of detecting its hidden traps; of breaking it down into its components; of rearranging these in new sequences that suit the responses he wishes to give; and of replying in complex and sometimes long-winded sentences over which he keeps full logical and syntactical control. By all appearances an intelligent man, he organizes and communicates his thoughts well—as indeed might be expected of a former SS officer who had succeeded in advancing by his own efforts to the rank of lieutenant-colonel with an important department under his command.

Nor, viewed close-up on the television screen, is Eichmann's "tic" or "twitch" really that. It is something quite different: no mere nervous reflex but a crooked bunching of the lips that comes in response to specific questions or statements by the prosecutor and that twists his face to one side, throwing it askew in a sour grimace. There is annoyance in this expression, and humiliation as well, mixed with hidden anger or rage—an anger or rage that the twisted lips fight to conceal, if not from himself, at least from the scrutiny of his judges.

Does this grimace, contrary to Arendt's view of him, make Eichmann a "monster"? Of course not; but it does hint at submerged depths that tell us there is more to the man than meets the eye. Again and again, the indignity of his position—*he*, the former *Obersturmbannfuehrer*, director of Section IV-B-4 of the Head Office for Reich Security, a once fearful figure to whose brutality several witnesses have testified, now incarcerated by Jews, questioned by Jews, judged by Jews—makes him wince with a revulsion that is at the same time an effort to remain reasonable and well-mannered.

And how well-mannered he is, rising promptly to reply to each question, sitting down again when he is done like a disciplined pupil in a classroom, answering "*Jawohl*" and "*Gewiss*" to the three German-speaking Jewish judges by whom he so clearly wants—this mass murderer of Jews—to be respected and liked. Is this simply in the hope of being acquitted? No, he is too clever to have had such a hope, or at least to put much stock in it. He actually looks up to these judges, *he* respects *them*, as much for the power they have over him as for the fairness they are trying to show, because he is a man who honors power, and the Jews now have it. Were these judges to command him, with the full authority of the court, to go out and murder a million Germans, one almost feels he would obey, not so much in the expectation of alleviating his sentence as in the desire to be diligent and useful.

Is Arendt not right about him, then?

No, she is wrong.

The personality of such a man, whom Gouri, to his consternation, finds himself once even pitying for the lies he is floundering in, could not have been formed by a dozen years of being a Nazi bureaucrat. He had a father, a mother, a childhood, an upbringing (who knows to which of these he owed the first dark rage? the first deeply injurious humiliation? the desire to please? the worshipful admiration of authority?), as did the other Germans who acted as hideously as he did. He was twenty-six years old when he joined the Nazi party and thirty-nine when World War II ended in 1945 and he resourcefully melted away, at first into the anonymity of a German lumberjack (he was physically strong and not afraid of hard labor) and then into that of an Argentinian mechanic (skillful with his hands, too). No one becomes who he is at age twenty-six.

It was only, one supposes, because Arendt was so entranced by her own theories that she, who left Germany the year Hitler came to power, did not take more into account the fact that the Third Reich ran its course in the briefest of historical moments—long enough, to be sure, to spread death and ruin as far as it could, but hardly enough to make a mindless cog of anyone who was not one beforehand. Nazism was not Soviet Communism, which lasted sufficiently long to raise three generations of children and even to be administered by them. (And we now know what happened to it when it was.) If the Holocaust was the work of bureaucrats, their minds were not formed by totalitarianism. They were formed by the Germany of the Weimar Republic, and of the Kaiser, and of the Christian churches. If they were easily persuaded that the Jews deserved to die, this persuasion came from an older Germany, too.

HAIM GOURI was right to be puzzled by Eichmann. Being an imaginative writer and a professional journalist rather than a political theorist writing for the *New Yorker* (a magazine to whose social snobbery Arendt brought an intellectual snobbery of her own: how boring, how dull the Eichmanns of the world were!), he knew that he was looking at something more complicated than "banality." Even the most banal bureaucrat, working under the most repressive system, is somebody. He continues to have his likes and dislikes, to think well of or to despise his boss, to do his work with greater or lesser alacrity, to delay or neglect tasks he does not want to perform, to stay away from his desk as much as he can if he hates his job, to gossip about it with his fellow workers.

Reflecting on Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* today, one realizes how much it was a product of the 1940's and 1950's, when—the inner rot of Soviet society not yet evident—the totalitarian capacity for mind-control as depicted in a novel like Orwell's *1984* seemed all-powerful. Today we know that human beings are far more resilient than Orwell credited them with being in the face of totalitarian manipulation. The

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Nazi machinery of extermination did not work as smoothly as it did because it was carried out in a fit of "sheer thoughtlessness." It worked because people like Eichmann *thought*, and having done so, saw nothing wrong with what they were doing.

Eichmann was indeed in this sense paradigmatic—not of the bureaucrat under totalitarianism, but of the ordinary German infected with an anti-Semitism that, even if he was only a carrier of it with no prior symptoms in his private life, found the logic of the Final Solution impeccable. To understand why the Holocaust was possible, it is thus at least as important, as several historians have argued, to understand the specific culture of traditional German anti-Semitism as it is to understand the specific culture of Nazi office life. But this was something that did not greatly interest Arendt, perhaps because it would have meant dwelling, if not on "the suffering of the Jews," at least on the Jews themselves in relation to their neighbors. She had the higher goal of elucidating the Holocaust's universal significance. Its parochially Jewish one could be left to writers like Haim Gouri.

Unlike *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, *Facing the Glass Booth* has no theories about the Holocaust to offer. Gouri's reactions to the trial were impressionistic, spontaneous, contradictory—and therefore more reliable. He gave his attention to each story, Eichmann's too, and conveyed in his reporting that because the Holocaust was the sum of all its stories, only a small fraction of which would ever be told, it would always remain in some sense a riddle. Not even the history of German anti-Semitism can explain why one person took part gladly in killing Jews, another looked on with approval or equanimity, another was troubled but no more than that, and still another—but of these there were very few—had the conscience and the courage to resist. In the end, it was up to Adolf Eichmann to decide which of these he would be. Perhaps this is what Haim Gouri had in mind when he wrote that things might be "simpler than we think."

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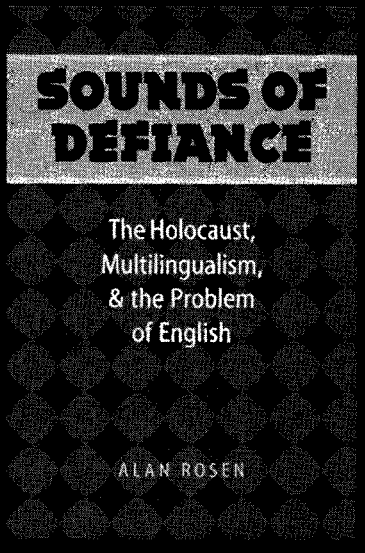

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MUSIC

Romantics' Return

Terry Teachout

TO WHAT extent, if any, should the quality of a work of art be judged by its originality?

The answer to this question is far from obvious. Yet in the course of the century-long reign of modernism in the arts, it came to be taken for granted that to be innovative was desirable in and of itself. Despite the fact that every great artist in every medium has derived innumerable aspects of his style and technique from the example of his predecessors, the word "derivative" became one of the most commonly employed terms of abuse in the critical lexicon.

Even after the collapse of the avant-garde monopoly, many critics have continued to employ the now-discredited rhetoric of late modernism—in particular, music critics who object to the growing popularity of the kind of tonal music they contemptuously dismiss as "neoromantic." For them, *any* music written after World War I, be it by Puccini and Rachmaninoff or by such present-day "new tonalists" as Lowell Liebermann and Paul Moravec, is unacceptable if it makes use of expressive devices derived from the composers of the 19th century.[1]

It is tempting, and not altogether wrong, to suggest that the last word about such criticism was pronounced by Fairfield Porter, the American painter who was also one of the outstanding art critics of the 20th century:

> To say that you cannot paint the figure today is like an architectural critic saying that you must not use ornament, or as if a literary critic proscribed reminiscence. In each case the critical remark is less descriptive of what is going on than it is a call for a following—a slogan demanding allegiance. In this case criticism is so much influenced by politics that it imitates the technique of a totalitarian party on the way to power.

Porter, himself a figurative painter, had in mind here the criticism of Clement Greenberg, whose belief in the historical inevitability of abstraction was conditioned by his Marxist politics. Yet Porter might just as well have been speaking of the composer-conductor Pierre Boulez, who famously declared in 1952 that "any musician who has not experienced . . . the necessity for the dodecaphonic [twelve-tone] language is USELESS. For his whole work is irrelevant to the needs of his epoch."

In the event, history proved Greenberg and Boulez equally wrong. Not only is figurative painting still alive and well, but the twelve-tone method of Arnold Schoenberg, which Boulez advocated with a zealousness bordering on the dictatorial, is no longer practiced by any important composer anywhere in the world, and no more than a handful of twelve-tone works has entered the standard concert repertoire.

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[1] For more about Liebermann and Moravec, see my essay, "The New Tonalists" (COMMENTARY, December 1997). Moravec's *Tempest Fantasy*, which won the Pulitzer Prize last year, is now available in a "creator recording" by the clarinetist David Krakauer and the Trio Solisti (Arabesque Z7691).

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None of this means, however, that a mature artist simply *imitates* the art of the past. The following thought experiment may help to explain why. Suppose a reputable musicologist were to announce one day that he has discovered the manuscript of a hitherto unknown Fifth Symphony by Brahms, and that this symphony is comparable in quality to its four predecessors. Then, after the work has been performed and recorded by a prominent conductor and taken up by numerous orchestras, an obscure musician discloses that he wrote it (and forged a manuscript copy sufficiently plausible-looking to hoodwink the musicologist) in order to win recognition for his other compositions, all of which are similar in style to the music of Brahms. Would we still want to listen to "Brahms's Fifth," knowing that it is not really by Brahms? And would the actual quality of the work itself be diminished in any way by that knowledge?

Obviously, the answer to the first question is yes and to the second question no. In practice, however, such things simply do not happen. To the best of my knowledge, no one has ever successfully faked an important large-scale work of art by a great artist working in a medium other than painting. This is not to say that such a thing would be impossible, but that it seems never to have occurred to anyone.[2]

In fact, to anyone capable of composing a symphony as good as those of Brahms, it would almost certainly not occur to attempt one that sounded as though it were *by* Brahms. The minds of great artists do not work that way, just as the style of a master is peculiarly resistant to being counterfeited (as opposed to being parodied) by a craftsman of lesser stature. Imitability is not a trait readily associated with greatness.

In any case, to paraphrase T.S. Eliot, great artists do not imitate, they steal, and in so doing they transform their stolen goods into something wholly personal and individual. When a great composer knowingly evokes the past, he does so in ways other than imitative. The "neoclassical" compositions of Paul Hindemith and Igor Stravinsky, for example, do not sound like Bach, Handel, Haydn, or Mozart. Even though they make use of compositional devices borrowed from the works of those earlier composers, they employ these devices in their own highly idiosyncratic ways, with highly individual results. As a result, the neoclassicism of Hindemith, Stravinsky, and their most gifted followers is viewed—correctly—as an original style in its own right.

Neoromanticism, by contrast, has almost always been regarded with suspicion by critics, even though it has been embraced by at least as many composers as has neoclassicism. (The second edition of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* devotes twice as much space to neoclassicism as to neoromanticism.) Is this because neoromantic music is inferior in quality? Or is it merely the last gasp of the same prejudice in favor of innovation for its own sake that once led avant-garde composers and their critical sympathizers to dismiss all tonal music as "useless"?

These questions are at the heart of Walter Simmons's *Voices in the Wilderness: Six American Neo-Romantic Composers*, the first in a planned six-volume series of critical studies of modern American composers who, in the author's words, have "created significant, artistically meaningful bodies of work without abandoning traditional principles, forms, and procedures."[3]

In *Voices in the Wilderness*, Simmons contends that the conventional wisdom regarding modern music is in need of revision. He repudiates the mistaken notion that "the evolution of the tonal system proceeded according to a linear progression that led inevitably to the dissolution of tonality altogether." He further believes that the avant-garde establishment, as a result of its dominance over the music departments of influential colleges and universities, was able to exert undue influence on the postwar classical-music scene in America, with devastating results:

> [Its] attitudes filtered down to journalist-critics, who expressed them in the press, fostering a division in the public between those who prided themselves on their sophistication and disparaged new music that lacked "originality" and those who defiantly rejected "modern music" altogether. . . . This disparagement and suppression of tonal music amounted to a *de facto* blacklisting of composers who failed to conform to the approved version of music history.

Among those American composers who suffered most from the postwar intolerance of the avant-garde establishment, Simmons says, were Samuel Barber, Paul Creston, Nicolas Flagello, Vittorio Giannini, Howard Hanson, and the Swiss émigré composer Ernest Bloch, who spent most of his adult life in the U.S. According to Simmons, these men ranked among "the most conservative of the [American] traditionalists," and their insistence on embracing "many of the stylistic features of late-19th-century music" made them anathema to critics who refused to believe that such an approach could yield artistically valid results at mid-century. Yet Simmons believes their best work to have

[2] The Dutch painter Han van Meegeren was able successfully to forge Vermeers in the 1930's and 40's and sell them for high prices (one was purchased by Hermann Goering) because Vermeer was at that time a comparatively obscure artist, whose true style was known only to a small group of scholars and connoisseurs. Today, van Meegeren's fake Vermeers, which can be viewed on line at http://www.tnunn.f2s.com/vm-main.htm, would immediately strike any art-world professional as anachronistic.

[3] Scarecrow Press, 419 pp., $69.95.

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been comparable in quality to that of such European contemporaries as Arthur Honegger, Sergei Prokofiev, Dmitri Shostakovich, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and William Walton, and he defines the nature of their achievement in unequivocal terms:

> Each composer's body of work is characterized by an overall seriousness of purpose reflected in works of ambitious scope that attempt to address the fundamental existential and spiritual concerns of humanity.

My guess is that many readers—even those well disposed to the revaluation of the music of America's tonal modernists—will find this argument somewhat suspect, at least at first glance. To be sure, the music of Samuel Barber has always been popular with concertgoers, and in recent years it has also come to be viewed favorably by a generation of critics who do not share the biases of their elders.[4] But none of the other four American composers discussed in *Voices in the Wilderness* has achieved anything remotely approaching Barber's near-universal currency; while Creston and Hanson were once heard frequently in American concert halls, the music of Flagello and Giannini has always been more or less obscure. In addition, the inclusion of Ernest Bloch in a group of American neoromantic composers deserving of wider recognition, though it may make a kind of sense on paper, serves in practice merely to render Simmons's argument more diffuse and less compelling.

No less problematic is that so little of what Simmons believes to be the best music of Flagello and Giannini is available on CD. To this end, he has posted on his website, www.walter-simmons.com, downloadable mp3 digital sound files of excerpts from the music of all six composers. Upon listening, alas, I conclude that Flagello and Giannini were competent but essentially academic composers whose well-made music, putting aside the question of its originality, was not consistently interesting enough to command attention. Given the fact that this is the first in a series of volumes, it thus strikes me that Simmons's cause might have been better served had he chosen instead to write about such better-known figures as David Diamond, Bernard Herrmann, or Ned Rorem, all of whom he cites as being "arguably comparable in stature" to Flagello, Giannini, and the other composers included in *Voices in the Wilderness*.

To be sure, Simmons has spent far more time with their music than I have, and I may be wrong to dismiss Flagello and Giannini as minor figures. Moreover, his book is useful and admirable for reasons other than its specific critical judgments. To begin with, his introduction offers an impressively clear summary of the various ways in which the history of musical modernism is in need of correction and revision. His largely non-technical descriptions of the music discussed in *Voices in the Wilderness* are models of accessibility. Above all, he is a thoughtful, balanced critic whose respect for his subjects does not stop him from admitting their flaws; his analysis of Samuel Barber's musical style, for example, is exceptionally fair-minded and insightful.

OUTSIDE OF the introduction, the most valuable parts of *Voices in the Wilderness* are the chapters devoted to Howard Hanson and Paul Creston, both of whom are prime candidates for revival, albeit to different degrees and for differing reasons.

Indeed, Hanson (1896-1981) never quite disappeared from the American musical scene, and for a time he was almost as well known as Aaron Copland or Virgil Thomson. Like them, too, he was more than merely a composer. Hanson ran the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York from 1924 to 1964, and conducted the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra in dozens of recordings of his own music and that of many other American composers. His Second Symphony ("Romantic," 1930) was a genuine popular success (Arturo Toscanini performed it with the NBC Symphony) and is still played on occasion by American orchestras, while his only opera, *Merry Mount*, was produced in 1934 by the Metropolitan Opera, though it failed to be taken up elsewhere. Gerard Schwarz recorded most of his orchestral scores with the Seattle Symphony in the 80's, and these recordings led to a resurgence of interest in his music that continues on a limited basis to this day.

Hanson's "Romantic" Symphony offers a near-ideal occasion for a consideration of the relative importance of innovation and individuality in art. A tuneful, expansive exercise in traditional romanticism, couched in an idiom conservative even by the prevailing standards of 1930, it contains no musical devices that would have sounded out of place in a symphony written a quarter-century earlier.[5] Yet it is not "derivative," at least not in the sense of sounding like someone else's music, nor will listeners familiar with later works by Hanson have any trouble spotting his distinctive stylistic fingerprints. Save for an occasional fleeting reminiscence of Sibelius, the "Romantic" Symphony is a genuinely individual statement, one whose implications Hanson himself summed up neatly at the time of its premiere:

> The symphony represents for me my escape from the rather bitter type of modern musical realism which occupies so large a place

[4] See my "Samuel Barber's Revenge" (COMMENTARY, October 1996).

[5] Simmons points out that Hanson began composing at a time when Debussy, Puccini, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Sibelius, and Richard Strauss were all alive and active. He was, in other words, "not reviving a style from the past" but "evolving along a continuum still very much alive."

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in contemporary thought. Much contemporary music seems to me to be showing a tendency to become entirely too cerebral. . . . I have, therefore, aimed in this symphony to create a work that was young in spirit, lyrical and romantic in temperament, and simple and direct in expression.

It is not, however, an especially *memorable* statement, for the thematic material is both undistinguished and poorly argued. This has nothing to do with the piece's alleged lack of originality. Rather, as Simmons observes, the "Romantic" Symphony consists of "a sequence of emotional states, juxtaposed with no apparent sense of progression, either psychological or purely musical." It is not bad because it is unoriginal, but because it is musically unsatisfactory, even on its own conservative terms.

Not until later in life did Hanson abandon the traditional Austro-German symphonic framework that he so clearly found unsympathetic. Once he did so, he began to produce more loosely structured pieces whose freer form was better suited to their romantic content. The strongest of these works, in particular the Fifth Symphony ("Sinfonia Sacra") of 1954, are both structurally convincing and powerfully expressive, and there is no good reason why they should not be more widely heard today.[6]

WHY, THEN, are they not? One possible explanation is put forward by Simmons, who recalls in the introduction to *Voices in the Wilderness* how in the 1980's the tonally based music of such "minimalists" as Philip Glass and John Adams was greeted with immediate acclaim by audiences who had grown tired of the hermetic insularities of late modernism:

> The result of force-feeding non-traditional musical styles to a public that became increasingly uncertain of its own reactions and insecure in its own tastes was a gradual estrangement of the audience from the music of its own time. . . . A radical repudiation of the intellectual complexity of serialism and minimalism aroused an astonishingly enthusiastic response from audiences. However, most of the composers who had maintained their commitment to traditional tonality all along were now largely forgotten.

Even more completely forgotten than Hanson was Paul Creston (1906-1985), who for a time had ranked alongside Copland as the most frequently played American composer. The son of poor Italian immigrants, Creston was a completely self-taught musician who did not finish his first full-scale work until he was twenty-six—an unusually late start for a classical composer. Despite his lack of training, he won immediate recognition, and throughout the 40's and 50's his works were performed by such world-class artists as Toscanini, Eugene Ormandy, Pierre Monteux, Fritz Reiner, George Szell, the pianist Earl Wild, and the Hollywood String Quartet. By the mid-60's, though, his music had disappeared from the programs of America's major orchestras, and for the rest of his life he devoted most of his energy to teaching and writing a series of theoretical works, dying in obscurity in 1985.

Few classical composers have achieved such popularity so quickly, followed by an equally quick decline in prestige. Part of the problem may have been that Creston's mature style failed to develop to any substantial degree—his music was all of a piece, early and late—and this caused him to become increasingly predictable and repetitious from the mid-50's onward. In addition, his extroverted, brightly colored work, redolent of the optimism of the postwar era, clashed violently with the mounting intellectual sourness of critics of the 50's, who had no use for populists like Creston. As they grew more influential, he found it harder and harder to get a fair hearing.

Still, it is impossible to see why a beautifully crafted, unfailingly effective piece like Creston's Second Symphony (1944), perhaps his best and certainly his most successful composition, should have fallen out of the standard repertoire. A two-movement work of tremendous rhythmic vitality in which the expanded language of modern tonality is used to ingenious effect, it was aptly described by the composer as "an apotheosis of the two foundations of all music: song and dance." While the Second Symphony breaks no new musical ground, it is a wholly personal statement, and Simmons's enthusiastic summing-up of its considerable virtues is in no way exaggerated:

> Perhaps Creston's most remarkable compositional gift was his ability to create music that sounds spontaneous and natural, but, on closer inspection, reveals a subtle logic underlying virtually every measure. . . . In its rich elaboration and thorough integration of a personal and original aesthetic concept into a cohesive work of great appeal, Creston's Second stands as a major landmark of American neoromanticism and one of the most significant American symphonies of the 1940's.[7]

The failure of American orchestras to program this piece—or any of a half-dozen of Creston's other

[6] The composer's 1958 recording of the "Romantic" Symphony with the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra is available on *Hanson Conducts Hanson* (Mercury 432 008-2). Gerard Schwarz and the Seattle Symphony have recorded the Fifth Symphony (Delos DE 3130).

[7] Creston's Second Symphony has been recorded several times, most recently (and very effectively) by Theodore Kuchar and the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, coupled with the First and Third Symphonies (Naxos 8.559034). Of like interest is the Hollywood String Quartet's 1953 recording of Creston's String Quartet (Testament SBT 1053).

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important works—says much about the continuing effects of the now-defunct avant-garde monopoly on our musical life.

IN HIS old age, Samuel Barber spoke bitterly of his failure to win the same acclaim from critics that he had won from American concertgoers:

> It's true I've had little success in intellectual circles. I'm not talked about in the *New York Review of Books*, and I was never part of the Stravinsky "inner circle." In Aaron Copland's book, *Our American Music*, my name appears in a footnote. . . . In fact, it is said that I have no style at all, but that doesn't matter. I just go on doing, as they say, my thing. I believe this takes a certain courage.

It did indeed, and it took even greater courage for those American composers who became even more isolated than Barber to live with the uncomprehending hostility of the critics of the 60's and 70's. As late as 1981, the *New York Times* was capable of writing in its obituary of Howard Hanson that he "stood for a tradition that most of his influential colleagues considered dead." Only a few of Hanson's younger contemporaries, most notably Ned Rorem, would live long enough to see the tide turn in favor of tonality. "The Red Queen [of *Alice in Wonderland*] said you've got to run fast to stay in one place," Rorem once said. "I stayed in one place. Now it's clear I've run fast."

Hanson and Paul Creston were not so fortunate, and even now their music, like that of other American traditionalists like Walter Piston and William Schuman, is more talked about than played. Fortunately, the existence of recordings of many (though by no means all) of the major works of these composers has made it possible for individual listeners to uncover the lost tradition of tonal modernism.

No less significant is the fact that younger tonal composers like Paul Moravec are coming at last to be seen as major figures in their own right. It would be salutary if this development were accompanied by the discovery by younger performers of those earlier composers who were wrongly dismissed as "derivative" because they believed in the enduring validity of tonality. Whatever they may have lacked in "originality," the best of them lacked nothing in individuality. As Walter Simmons rightly says, their attractive, accessible music "had—and still has—the ability to bridge the gap between composer and audience [and] to enrich a musical repertoire that has become stagnant with the tried and true."

For all these reasons, their music deserves to be heard, not merely on record but also in the concert halls and opera houses of America and, ultimately, the world. I hope that *Voices in the Wilderness* and its successors will help make that happen.

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Books in Review

Dismal Science

Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything

by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner

Morrow. 242 pp. $25.95

Reviewed by
James Q. Wilson

DURING MY many years of lecturing on crime, invariably the first two questions I would be asked were: "What do you think of the death penalty?" and "What do you think of gun control?"

No more. Now the first question is whether I believe that legalized abortion has cut the crime rate. For this I can thank *Freakonomics*, the weirdly named book by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner that has been high on the *New York Times* best-seller list for weeks now. My answer, by the way, is no: I do not believe the evidence shows a causal link between legalized abortion and our reduced crime rate.

Levitt, an acquaintance of mine, is an immensely talented economist whose restless mind has inquired into all sorts of fascinating topics. The book, written with the journalist Stephen J. Dubner (who in 2003 published an admiring article about Levitt in the *New York Times Magazine*), is a popular account of the many studies Levitt has done on subjects as diverse as real-estate agents, schoolteachers, sumo wrestlers, drug dealers, parenting, and the names given to black and white children. Also on abortion and crime.

The problem with a journalistic book about a serious scholar is that journalism does not tell you much, if anything, about the techniques the scholar has used, the challenges to his data that others have raised, or the scholar's response to those criticisms. While I am glad this book has exposed Levitt to a broad audience, I hope that anybody who is excited by it will go to his original studies and examine them carefully. Luckily, most of what he has written is quite accessible to the general reader.

BACK TO abortion and crime. Levitt's argument is that, with the legalization of abortion by the Supreme Court's 1973 decision in *Roe* v. *Wade*, many fetuses were killed in America that would otherwise have led to the birth of unwanted children. Such unwanted children, receiving little affection and guidance, would have been more likely to commit crimes when grown. Ergo, their removal from the population had something to do with our lowered crime rates.

Why should we think such children would have been unwanted? Because, Levitt contends, they would have been born to thousands of poor, single, teenage mothers. Levitt conspicuously refrains from saying so, but a very large fraction of these poor, single, teenage mothers would have been African American: over 60 percent of all black children are born out of wedlock, and the abortion rate is roughly three times greater among black than among white women.

To prove that abortion reduced crime, Levitt and his coauthor on the original paper, John Donohue, examined crime rates 15 to 18 years after the *Roe* decision, and found a

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drop. Moreover, they pointed out that five states had already legalized abortion three to four years *before* the decision; in these early-legalizing states, crime rates fell sooner than in states that did not permit abortion until *Roe*.

You would never know it from this book, but not only have these claims been criticized but several scholars have offered rival theories. On the issue of abortion rates alone, the economists John Lott and John Whitley have written that, even before *Roe*, many anti-abortion states allowed abortion if the life or health of the mother was at risk; in these states, there were at least as many abortions per 1,000 live births pre-*Roe* as in states that had made abortion legal. Why, then, attribute falling crime rates to legalized abortion?

Levitt and Donohue have rejoined that, in those states where abortions were still nominally illegal, it was well-to-do white women who mainly availed themselves of the loopholes in the system. But there is no evidence of this; to the contrary, black women were over-represented among those having abortions in such states.

Now look at homicide rates by the age of suspected offenders. In the late 1990's, roughly a quarter-century after *Roe*, the murder rate was falling for offenders aged twenty-six and older—a class of offenders much too old to have been affected by *Roe* one way or the other. As for the youngest offenders, those between sixteen and twenty, their murder rate had jumped up in the early 1990's, probably because of involvement in the crack cocaine trade. Again, no *Roe* effect.

George Akerlof, Janet Yellen, and Michael Katz have argued that legalized abortion actually *increased* the number of out-of-wedlock first births—because the availability of abortion, along with the advent of new contraceptive devices, rendered sex "cost-free" for men but not necessarily for the women they impregnated. Were the children who were increasingly likely to be born to unmarried women "unwanted"? Perhaps they were, but we do not know; Akerlof and his colleagues have not given us sufficient evidence.

As of now, no one is entitled to decide who is correct in this matter, whether Levitt or any of his critics. But it is certainly premature to say that Levitt is right, and positively disconcerting to take the word of an enamored journalist that Levitt *must* be right.

On another controversial matter, however, Levitt is clearly right, and I am his victim. I once wrote that the proportion of juveniles in the population was going up and that therefore the crime rate would go up. Levitt correctly takes me to task for this unwarranted assertion, which was later proved wrong. His criticism reminds me of something my Ph.D. adviser once said, no doubt quoting someone whose name I have forgotten: social scientists should never try to predict the future; they have trouble enough predicting the past.

THE ABORTION-CRIME connection takes up only a small portion of this book; I have dallied on it because it has drawn so much attention, and because it may be symptomatic of a general disposition on the part of Levitt or his coauthor to avoid being thought politically incorrect. For just as this book's discussion of abortion ignores race, so its chapter on the gap in educational achievement between blacks and whites soft-pedals some indisputably important facts.

The chapter begins by considering how little influence parents may exert over their child's personality, given that half of the difference among personalities can be attributed to genes. This is quite correct. But genes also account for well over half (in some studies, as much as three-quarters) of differences in intellectual ability. If we are to explain the black-white gap in educational achievement, we cannot turn away from the fact that on average, African Americans have a lower IQ than white Americans.

There are, of course, many highly talented blacks and many really stupid whites. But these important *individual* differences are not relevant to explaining the average difference between black and white school achievement. That difference is not the product of racist innuendo; the matter has been measured for decades, often by means of tests that do not require the use of words.

It is true enough that black IQ scores have risen—owing, one suspects, to improvements in the social condition of blacks over the last several generations. But the black-white gap in educational attainment has not narrowed. In *Freakonomics*, the authors assert that this gap is the result of differences in incomes between blacks and whites. Such differences certainly exist. But income differences are themselves in large measure the result of differences in intelligence, so one cannot explain the gap in IQ-based school scores by "controlling" for income.

The best test of this was done by Sandra Scarr and Richard Weinberg. They looked for changes in the IQ scores of black children who had been adopted by white families, mostly middle-class and well-educated. Over a ten-year period, there was no significant gain in the IQ's of the adopted black children. (Nor was there any gain in the IQ's of adopted white children.) The data strongly suggest that parental environment, even in well-to-do families, has only a modest and probably short-lived effect on educational ability.

If you bothered to look up Levitt's original paper on the black-white test gap, written with Ronald G. Fryer, you would find that the authors are indeed aware of the many other studies that have been done of this issue. But they also think that once one "controls" for socioeconomic status, black and white schoolchildren become "observationally equivalent." Observationally, perhaps; but not actually.

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As they themselves note, moreover, the gap between black and white test scores increases as children get older, and this widening gap cannot be explained by socio-economic differences in the quality of the schools the children attend. Experts on genetics have long known that heritability increases with age, and so, as a result, will the average gaps in school achievement between white and black children.

After wrongly minimizing the role of IQ, *Freakonomics* returns to the issue of parental influence on educational achievement. Here, Levitt and Dubner make some excellent points. Whether a mother works, whether the neighborhood is depressing, whether the child watches a lot of television, whether he or she attends a Head Start program—all of these factors have next to no educational effect. The fact is that parental behavior has a limited impact—which means that many of the villains allegedly responsible for our children's low school achievement are not villains at all.

There is much else to praise in this book as well, and much to learn from Levitt's observations. Did you know, for example, that real-estate brokers get more money for their own homes than they do for others'? That sumo wrestlers and some Chicago schoolteachers cheat? That swimming pools are more dangerous than guns? That drug dealers live at home with their moms? That people select names for their children in ways that differ tellingly by race and social class?

In general, the great strength of Levitt's work is that he asks interesting questions and searches hard for facts that can help answer them. Since he is an economist, he is not telling people how they ought to behave, only trying to explain how they do behave. And unlike some economists, he does not believe that human behavior can be understood simply on the basis of how much money people earn. In 1976, on the bicentennial of American independence, I recall talking to a friend who later won the Nobel Prize in economics. He refused to accept that the Revolutionary war had cost Americans heavily in higher taxes and a depreciated currency. If we looked hard enough, he assured me, we would discover that we Americans started the Revolution in order to become economically better off.

Levitt does not make mistakes like that, which is one reason I urge people to read this book, even though much that is crucial has been left out or ignored. My advice is this: if you find something that intrigues you in *Freakonomics*, do not rely on the book to give you a full explanation of it. Instead, look up in a college library or on the Internet the articles Levitt has written, and study them. I wish he had assembled these articles and published them as a book. He would have made much less money, but his ideas would have been much clearer and, even in their scholarly form, easier to deal with.

Wild About Harry

Becoming Justice Blackmun: Harry Blackmun's Supreme Court Journey

by Linda Greenhouse

Times Books. 268 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Ken I. Kersch

By the time of his death in 1999, the reputation of Supreme Court Justice Harry A. Blackmun had come to be defined by his au-

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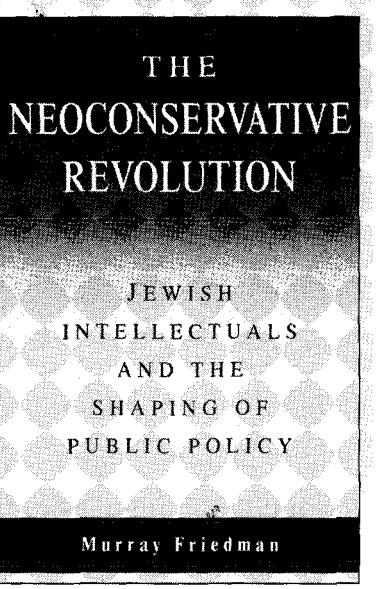

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thorship of a single opinion—*Roe* v. *Wade* (1973), the Court's most controversial and incendiary decision of the last half-century. A one-man political cleavage, Blackmun played a significant role in realigning the partisan loyalties of millions of Americans. He was both excoriated and celebrated, drowned in a sea of letters marking him a "baby killer" and feted by feminists like Gloria Steinem, who, in presenting him with an award, declared that he had "saved more American women's lives than anyone in our nation's history."

Drawing on the largely unexplored territory of Blackmun's newly released papers, Linda Greenhouse, the long-time Supreme Court reporter of the *New York Times*, has written an absorbing valentine to the Justice. It is at once a case study in the vicissitudes of human fate and a remarkable window into the politics of the modern judiciary.

A SCHOLARSHIP student from St. Paul, Minnesota, Blackmun graduated from Harvard in 1929 near the top of his class and then stayed on to attend the law school, where his performance was solid but less distinguished. Law degree in hand, he returned to Minnesota, first to take a clerkship with a federal judge and then to join a prestigious Minneapolis firm. One of his clients, Minnesota's famed Mayo Clinic, eventually asked Blackmun to become its first resident general counsel, a position in which he served from 1950 to 1959, years he afterward regularly described as the happiest of his life.

Meanwhile, the career trajectory of Warren Burger, Blackmun's best friend since their boyhood days together in St. Paul, and a parallel focus of Greenhouse's book, was moving in a very different direction. Burger had stayed in Minnesota for college and law school, and like Blackmun began practicing with a prestigious firm. But while the cautious Blackmun stayed close to home, the more adventuresome Burger was led toward engagement with the wider world. Burger was passionate about politics. Having caught the eye of Republican leaders as a local activist, he was asked to join the Eisenhower administration in 1953 as an assistant attorney general. Three years later, despite doubts about whether he was "qualified for this damn job," Burger accepted an appointment to the federal Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, where he served until Richard Nixon tapped him for the Supreme Court in 1969.

As occasions arose, Burger pushed for the advancement of his old friend Harry Blackmun, though Greenhouse makes clear that the diffident and risk-averse Blackmun was profoundly ambivalent about the opportunities that Burger and others steered his way. In 1959, Blackmun reluctantly accepted an appointment to the federal Court of Appeals in St. Louis. Almost immediately, he found himself buffeted by a stream of politically charged cases involving school desegregation and corporal and capital punishment.

From the start, Blackmun was torn between his liberal sympathies in certain areas and his institutional and temperamental commitment to judicial restraint. An emotional man, hypersensitive to criticism, he approached each difficult decision with a hand-wringing agony. When a colleague on the Court of Appeals criticized as "gratuitous" a portion of a death-penalty opinion he had written, Blackmun was, Greenhouse reports, "deeply wounded." "The paragraph," he pleaded, "was written out of a feeling of sincerity and conviction on my part."

Greenhouse shows the divergent reactions of Blackmun and Burger—eventually dubbed the "Minnesota Twins" by Supreme Court-watchers—both to their experiences on the bench and, ultimately, to their elevation to the heights of the judiciary. Legal scholars often talk about Justice Blackmun's "journey" or "odyssey" as a judge—he was a moderate Republican who, as the years went on, voted increasingly with the Court's most liberal members, William Brennan and Thurgood Marshall. But Chief Justice Burger underwent an evolution of his own, albeit of a very different kind.

As American society became increasingly chaotic in the 1960's, the relatively moderate Burger began to complain publicly and passionately about the activism of the Warren Court, particularly its extension of the rights of criminal defendants and its constriction of the powers of prosecutors and the police. Blackmun shied away from discussing these issues. By the time Burger succeeded Earl Warren as Chief Justice in 1969, he was ready to change the world. "I am filled with plans, ideas, and programs. I want your ideas," he wrote to his old friend. Blackmun, predictably, demurred. Nominated to the Supreme Court as an ostensibly Burger-like stickler for law and order, Blackmun characteristically observed that "perhaps this was something that one did not turn down."

BLACKMUN'S EARLY decisions hewed to what might be expected of a relatively conservative Republican Justice. He found it excruciating to take a position on divisive issues—and often said so in his opinions. When a series of abortion cases came around, however, Blackmun found himself on more familiar and, as he thought, stable ground. He was given the responsibility of writing for the Court in *Roe* not because he was passionate about abortion rights, but because Burger considered the case a medical question for which Blackmun, given his extensive work for the Mayo Clinic, had the requisite intellectual background.

Over the summer, as the case was being held over for re-argument, Blackmun made a pilgrimage back to Mayo and buried himself in its li-

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brary for two weeks, researching the history and practice of abortion. Greenhouse found in his papers the fruits of that work, including a handwritten copy of a passage from the *American Journal of Public Health* which declared that "Safe, legal abortion is now recognized as a fundamental right of women, a protection of maternal health and family welfare, and an assurance that every child is a loved and wanted child. . . . The action of the U.S. Supreme Court is crucial."

With news stories and Gallup Poll results (scrupulously clipped at the time by Blackmun) showing that a majority of Americans, including a majority of Roman Catholics, were in favor of liberalized abortion laws, Blackmun never suspected that, for decades to come, *Roe* would become a defining issue in American politics. A fussbudget and a worrier, he was completely unprepared for the vicious attacks that would be directed at him in *Roe*'s aftermath. It was this pressure, Greenhouse's account suggests, that ultimately led him to become an increasingly doctrinaire defender of abortion rights, and much more of a constitutional liberal.

His "odyssey," as Greenhouse shows, here confirming previous accounts of the Burger Court, was helped along by the substantial influence of his clerks and other, outside sources. His papers brim with clipped articles, many of whose claims—and articulations—he wrote into the law of the land. Greenhouse reports, for example, that a clerk handed him an *Atlantic Monthly* article by McGeorge Bundy, then the president of the Ford Foundation (and formerly a Harvard faculty dean), asserting that "To get past racism, we must here take account of race. There is no other present way." Blackmun's subsequent opinion in the landmark University of California affirmative-action case of 1978 (*Bakke*) read, "In order to get beyond racism, we must first take account of race. There is no other way."

On the issue of capital punishment, a clerk (now a professor at Stanford Law School) chided Blackmun for an earlier opinion that was "far too tame, given what we're really talking about here." Another advised him that the Court's jurisprudence on capital punishment was careering toward moral and intellectual bankruptcy. Yet another wrote Blackmun a memo, in the Justice's own voice, setting out "Why I believe the time has come to abandon the effort to craft a constitutional death penalty." As the clerk wrote, "Efforts to fine-tune the machinery of death cannot succeed." When Blackmun finally disavowed the death penalty as unconstitutional, the most celebrated passage in his dissenting opinion read, "I will no longer tinker with the machinery of death."

As the criticisms of *Roe* intensified, Blackmun's proprietary attitude toward the opinion radiated outward, Greenhouse shows, and shaped his thinking in other areas of law as well, particularly concerning the rights of poor people and freedom of speech. Although his relatively conservative views in sex-discrimination cases ran on what Greenhouse calls a "parallel track" from his abortion decisions, in his later years, as *Roe*'s influence on him grew, the tracks converged, with Blackmun becoming an aggressive advocate of liberal views on the former issue.

The portrait Greenhouse paints of Blackmun is admiring but even-handed, providing as much ammunition for the Justice's detractors as for his admirers. She is particularly adept at suggesting the extent to which Blackmun's "journey" was shaped, on the one hand, by his own susceptibility to criticism and praise,

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and, on the other, by his law clerks and the conventional wisdom of the magazines and journals he read.

This is not to say that Blackmun let his clerks do all his work for him; about work, he was, if anything, obsessive. Nor is it to suggest that he became a liberal crusader. Indeed, Greenhouse demonstrates that Blackmun went through most of his career put off by the efforts of feminist lawyers (including current Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, then the lead litigator for the ACLU's Women's Right Project) to characterize women as an oppressed class. Still, in key areas—abortion, capital punishment, racial preferences—Blackmun plainly followed the trail of late-20th-liberalism, which goes a long way toward explaining the worshipful tone that commonly surrounds discussions of his modest legacy.

For all of her skill in sketching a plausible psychological portrait of Blackmun, Greenhouse is less scrupulous in tracing the origins of his opinions in the ideological passions of the age. Others who have had access to Blackmun's papers, like the historian David Garrow, have found there far more evidence of political scheming and vitriol on the part of his clerks. In working on the *Casey* decision (1992), which, while allowing certain restrictions, would affirm the "central holding" of *Roe*, one clerk advised Blackmun that "the evil Nino [Antonin Scalia] has yet to circulate . . . his monstrosity of a dissent." Another clerk, well aware of Blackmun's increasingly intense preoccupation with *Roe*'s politics, reminded him of the perils of upholding the decision right before the presidential election, since it would deprive the Left and Bill Clinton of a powerful issue while helping the "far Right" to reelect George H.W. Bush.

Such bald partisanship has become all too common in discussions of the Supreme Court since *Roe*, a period during which the Justices have repeatedly placed themselves at the center of the nation's most bitter controversies. Increasingly seen—both inside its chambers and out—as an instrument of ordinary politics, the Court has lost no small measure of its authority and legitimacy. Harry Blackmun was far from the only force pushing in this baleful direction, but he certainly deserves a fair share of the blame.

Word Power

Break, Blow, Burn

by Camille Paglia

Pantheon. 272 pp. $20.00

Reviewed by
Sam Schulman

CAMILLE PAGLIA, a scholar who slipped past the cultural gatekeepers in 1990 with the publication of *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*, is a figure to contend with. Like her great model, Oscar Wilde, an early "master of mass media," Paglia's life and epigrams have had as much impact as her published works.

A child of the 1950's, the young Paglia fell in love with literature and set out to spend her life in the academy as an apostle of great writing. After receiving her Ph.D. from Yale, she got a job in 1972 at the perfect place: Bennington College, in those days a distinguished liberal-arts school with a strong avant-garde and feminist tradition. At first she blossomed there, but according to her own account she soon self-destructed, entering "my most militant lesbian-feminist mode (which led to me getting fired after a fist-fight at a college dance)."

After Bennington, she proved unable to find another academic position at a liberal-arts institution—ever. For the next twelve years, she sustained herself by occasional part-time teaching jobs at art schools. According to her, she was poison—no one would hire her. The Philadelphia College of Art (now known as the University of the Arts) gave her shelter in 1984, and she has remained loyal to it ever since.

Throughout this difficult time, she continued her labors on *Sexual Personae*. Many people boast incessantly about their magnum opus. Very few ever write it. Proust is one of the few, Paglia another. After many rejections, Yale University Press took a chance on the 700-page tome, and she was launched.

The argument of *Sexual Personae* is a combination of D.H. Lawrence, Sir James Frazer, and Norman O. Brown. According to Paglia, the pagan underpinnings of our world have been only partly effaced by the repressiveness of Judeo-Christian civilization; sex and nature, "brutal" forces that constitute our true reality, still flourish in "art, eroticism, astrology, and pop culture," refuting every attempt to impose wishful thinking on a resistant world. This theme is pursued through Western and much of Eastern art and literature, with illuminating, exciting, and highly debatable things to say about every writer who has interested Paglia because of his or her decadence, sexuality, or witty cruelty.

Curiously, although Paglia claimed to be a woman of the Left, a feminist, and a gay activist, *Sexual Personae* was not greeted by the grandees of the cultural Left as she might have hoped. *The New York Review of Books* was silent. Instead, she was first recognized, if I remember correctly, by Roger Kimball in the *New Criterion*, who saw the book as a sensation, if a mixed one. When the *New York Times* took notice, the author of the review was not Susan Sontag but Terry Teachout, who called it an often brilliant, scorched-

SAM SCHULMAN *reviewed Tom Wolfe's* I Am Charlotte Simmons *in the January* COMMENTARY.

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earth attack on the philosophical underpinnings of liberalism and traditional feminism, written by an "exciting (if purple) stylist and an admirably close reader with a hard core of common sense."

Paglia's ensuing decade of fame—from 1990 to the 9/11 attacks—bore the stamp of her determined personality. As if in compensation for the decades before, she was ubiquitous—in *Vanity Fair*, on *Sixty Minutes*, on speaking platforms, debating with traditional feminists. She had, she would tell an interviewer, "all the publicity I could want." To cap her fame, she instituted a regular column in *Salon*, one of the first of the Internet's electronic-only media, thereby acquiring a new audience for her wide-ranging and peppery observations on sexual politics, the Clintons, and her old enemies in the academic world. Not since Norman Mailer abandoned his position as socialist anarchist and bought his first dinner jacket had there been such an anti-antinomian and original figure on the American Left.

In the period after *Sexual Personae*, Paglia also published two essay collections; but after September 11, 2001 she essentially fell mute. Her new book, *Break, Blow, Burn*, comes out of this relatively silent period. It is the result of an inward turn, and in many ways a response to the decade of her own fame. Although Paglia's publisher has dressed the book in a hot lipstick-pink dust-jacket, perhaps in the hope of finding a public for chick lit-crit, the cover does not represent the book.

Consisting of slow, careful, line-by-line readings of 43 great poems, *Break, Blow, Burn* (the title is taken from a sonnet by John Donne) is intended by Paglia to be a direct affront to aspects of today's cultural establishment. Both in her introduction and in a widely circulated series of interviews, she has lined up her two main enemies: contemporary poets and contemporary professors. The former disappoint her:

> Arresting themes or images are proposed, then dropped or left to dribble away. . . . [S]uggestive points are prosaically rephrased and hammered into obviousness. Rote formulas are rampant—a lugubrious victimology of accident, disease, and depression or a simplistic, ranting politics.

The latter group once knew how to read poems and teach others to do so. In the heyday of the New Criticism—"a sophisticated system of interpretation that has never been surpassed as a pedagogical tool"—close readers of poetry enjoyed "stratospheric reputations at the major universities." But all this ended as, in the following decades, "poetry and poetry study were steadily marginalized by pretentious 'theory'" and by the advent of post-structuralism with its "clotted jargon, circular reasoning, and smug, debunking cynicism."

Paglia's real aim in this book is, however, redemptive. She wants to recapture that "magic moment" of the 1950's and 1960's when poetry, a form "born in ancient ritual and cult," was not only prestigious but had the power to sanctify human experience. Revering poets as makers and creators, she hopes to revive, through her work, the dashed hopes and wasted energies of her aging generation, "flamingly altruistic yet hedonistic and self-absorbed, bold yet naïve, abundantly gifted yet plagued by self-destruction."

To accomplish all this, Paglia has, paradoxically, set aside the ambitious polemics and argumentative fireworks on display in *Sexual Personae*, as well as her encyclopedic knowledge of culture high and low, East and West. Instead, she means to use only the tools of the New Criticism to unlock the power of literature for readers. She pleads with them to slow down, to contemplate, to close the iBook, turn off the PodCasts, stop scribbling in the blogo-

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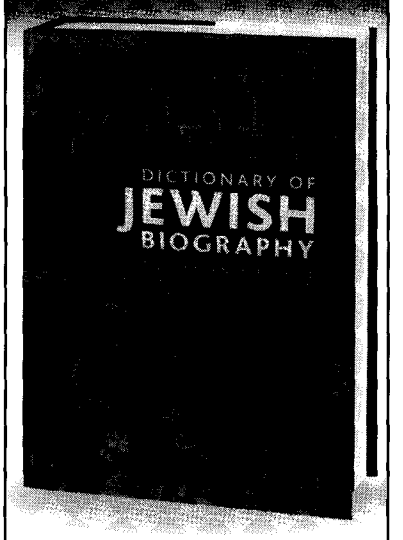

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sphere, and pay attention only to words and their power. Heeding her own admonition, Paglia has here deliberately suppressed much of her own speed, her wit, her wide-ranging intellect, and her fierce energy.

These qualities are missed. For all the honorableness of its intentions, *Break, Blow, Burn* does not achieve them. In particular, its case for the self-sufficiency of close reading falls short, both in Paglia's choice of poems to read and in her readings of them.

She begins with three Shakespeare sonnets, three sonnets by John Donne, and two short lyrics by George Herbert. Letting 150 years pass, she then brings together a collection of Romantic verse: two of William Blake's "Songs of Innocence and of Experience," a sonnet each by Wordsworth and Shelley, plus Coleridge's "Kubla Khan." She skips the Victorians. The last British voice (not counting the slavishly Anglicizing Sylvia Plath) is Yeats.

As for American poetry, Paglia opens with Whitman and Dickinson. She then turns to two modernist masters, Wallace Stevens (represented by two rather slight but programmatic poems) and William Carlos Williams (his two most anthologized short poems), before considering the Harlem Renaissance figures of Jean Toomer and Langston Hughes. Turning to poets still famous and working during her own youth, she chooses one great poem by Robert Lowell and three wonderful poems by the now-neglected Theodore Roethke.

The book ends with a curious assortment of contemporary work that Paglia insists was the best she could find. Two charming poems by Frank O'Hara and Paul Blackburn, offering contrasting camp and "beat" views of urban life, are followed by forgettable efforts from Gary Snyder, May Swenson, Chuck Wachtel, Norman H. Russell, Rochell Kraut, and Wanda Coleman. The capstone of the book is "Woodstock," one of the more wan lyrics of Joni Mitchell, which Paglia unaccountably proclaims "an important modern poem—possibly the most popular and influential poem composed in English since Sylvia Plath's 'Daddy.'"

IN MAKING these selections, Paglia has conspicuously avoided the challenge set by those whom her mentor Harold Bloom would call the strongest poets. Why is there no John Milton, for example, or none of Alexander Pope's savage lacerations of his enemies? Why does she choose work by Shelley and Wordsworth that is so untypical of their strength as poets? Why does she not show the connections *between* poems—by mentioning, for instance, that her Robert Lowell poem is an attempt to freshen Donne's lovers-in-bed poems, or that Sylvia Plath's "Daddy" owes a huge debt to the deliberately phony "American" ballads of Louis Macneice?

When it comes to contemporary verse, if Paglia's practice matched her advocacy, the later pages of her book would be the most lively and fervent, full of examples of creative strength and daring. Her inability to find strong lyrics more than a half-century old is one sign of failure. Another is the lyrics she does present. If she really believes that the best modern poets have been unable to produce works that last, why not test this proposition against at least one poet of deservedly high reputation—Elizabeth Bishop, James Merrill, W.H. Auden, or Philip Larkin among the noble dead, or, still with us, Jorie Graham or Galway Kinnell?

Paglia once published an op-ed in the *New York Times* proposing that the federal government offer grants to rock musicians, "America's most wasted natural resource." The Joni Mitchell lyric, a memorial to the lost and impossible dreams of the 1960's, would seem to confirm the wisdom of declining any such suggestion; it is certainly one of the more pallid expressions of that decade, and quite justly forgotten.

THEN THERE are Paglia's readings, the reading of which is intermittently bracing but more often tedious. T.S. Eliot, who would have agreed with her about the absurdity of "theory," said that the literary critic's only method is to be very intelligent. Paglia is capable of great intelligence in this book, but in too many places she provides mere paraphrase, a response to imagery with imagery-by-association. She is not interested enough in poetic logic, or keen enough to show the way poetry works—other than through its spooky, imagistic quality—and she frequently reduces the terror and pathos of a poem by re-expressing its theme in horror-movie terms: "Donne portrays himself, like Dali, as a showy phallic swordsman baffled and bemused by a forceful, alluring woman who brushes him away like a pesky fly." The overall effect is depressing.

Of course, Paglia is always capable of insight. But for the most part she does not meet the common-sense test that William Empson—the real founder of New Criticism—set for close reading: "You think that the poem is worth the trouble before you go into it carefully, and you know more about what it is worth when you have done so." In the case of contemporary poetry, Paglia all but confesses her disbelief that the specimens she has selected are really worth the trouble—and proceeds to teach us nothing at all about whatever worth they may possess.

IN THE end, what hobbles Paglia may well be her intense nostalgia for the 1960's. Whatever one finally thinks of that decade, a case can be made for certain of its forgotten aspects, and Paglia's attempt to articulate that case, using only the vocabulary of her literary apprenticeship, is hardly dishonorable. Her almost magical belief in the ritual

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powers of the New Criticism is driven by the thought that, if only we could all read as well as her teachers did, the age of Aquarius might dawn properly this time.

The trouble is that *Break, Blow, Burn* reads as if it were written by the artificially preserved hero of Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: by the innocent, idealistic, and austere Paglia that once was, rather than by the much more fascinating person that she has become. But of all the children of the age of Aquarius, she ought to know how pointless and dishonest it is to extol the humanity and morality of the people we once were. I prefer the Camille Paglia of the 21st century, and I wish she would resume being brilliant and cruel, and herself.

Greek Tragedy

Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims, and Jews, 1430-1950

by Mark Mazower

Knopf. 528 pp. $35.00

Reviewed by Andrew Apostolou

Ottoman history is a seductive topic. This is true partly for reasons of the empire's obvious geopolitical interest—its successor states include present-day Turkey, Iraq, Israel, and Libya—but perhaps in greater part because of the richness and rococo intricacy of the societies over which Constantinople long ruled. In *City of Ghosts*, Mark Mazower offers up a particularly exotic slice of Ottoman life, a detailed panorama of the city of Salonica, once the empire's chief European port, now a largely ignored corner of northern Greece.

A professor of history at Columbia and director of the university's Center for International History, Mazower first gained attention with *Inside Hitler's Greece* (1993), an elegant if overly romantic account of Greek resistance to German occupation during World War II. He recently served on a Columbia committee that investigated, and largely exonerated, faculty who were accused of intimidating Jewish students. Mazower's new work again shows him to be an accomplished practitioner of historical narrative—and an unreliable judge of historical culpability.

Named after the daughter of Philip of Macedon and the half-sister of Alexander the Great, Thessaloniki (as it is rendered in Greek) was a substantial commercial and political center in the ancient world, as well as an important center of Christian learning in the Byzantine Empire. An impoverished town by the time the Ottoman Turks sacked it in 1430, Salonica would likely have seen its fortunes wane permanently had it not been for an act of religiously motivated folly: Spain's expulsion of its Jews in 1492. Spain's loss was the Ottomans' gain.

The Sephardim not only revived Salonica, they made it into a remarkable Jewish enclave nestled between a Muslim empire and the largely Christian Balkans. Before the foundation of Tel Aviv in 1909, Salonica was the only city in the world whose main language was Jewish, in this case Judeo-Spanish, commonly known as Ladino (the Iberian equivalent of Yiddish). It was a city whose port closed on the Jewish Sabbath, when most of its stevedores rested.

Andrew Apostolou, *a new contributor and a historian of the Holocaust in Greece, works at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies in Washington, D.C., where he writes on terrorism, Iraq, and Central Asia.*

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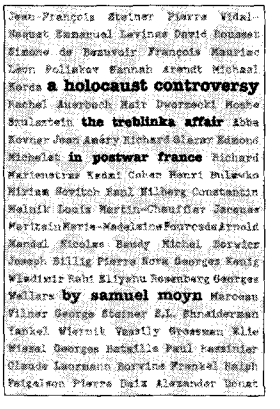

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Despite being second-class subjects in a Muslim state, Salonica's Jews carved out a remarkable degree of autonomy for themselves. The Ottomans tacitly supported the rabbinic courts, even though these bodies had no formal legal standing. And the city's rabbis, though nominally answerable to the chief rabbi in the Ottoman capital, wielded extraordinary local powers.

Salonica was governed very informally. The police force, according to Mazower, consisted of little more than a nightwatchman paid by local merchants to wander the streets, his "metal-tipped staff tapping out the hours on the cobbles as he made his rounds." The city was also disastrously overcrowded, resulting in devastating fires that would sweep periodically through the wooden shacks occupied by the poor. Conflagrations were such a fixture of Salonican life that, on Yom Kippur, the city's Jews would pray for divine protection from them.

THE OTTOMAN era ended when Greek troops entered the city in October 1912. At this point, Mazower changes course, providing less a history of Salonica or of the interplay among its ethnic components than an account of the often difficult relations between, in particular, the Greek state and the city's Jews.

At the time, just 25 percent of Salonica's inhabitants were Greek Christians, a fact of great concern to its new rulers. As one officer observed, Salonica was a "gaudy city with all the tribes of Israel," a place with "nothing Greek about it, nor European." So the Greek government set about "Hellenizing" Salonica with the usual tools of the nationalist state, imposing the Greek language, which was known by few of the city's residents, and changing street names.

An opportunity to do still more came in 1917, after the last of the great fires. With half of the population homeless, and most Jews without shelter, the Greek authorities swept away the charred remnants of the Ottoman city, replacing it with a French-style metropolis of broad, straight boulevards.

Engineering of a different sort was applied to Salonica's population. New housing estates were filled with Greek Christian refugees. These had arrived in large numbers after World War I and the failed Greek attempt to resurrect the Byzantine Empire by conquering western Turkey. In 1923, the city's Muslims were forced to move to Turkey as part of a population exchange. The minarets once vilified by a Greek journalist as "the symbols of a barbarous religion" were demolished, stripping Salonica of the most visible aspect of its Ottoman heritage.

With the Muslims gone, the Jews remained the only substantial non-Greek element in a city whose identity and appearance had changed drastically in just over a decade. Increasingly marginalized, many Jews emigrated. Most of those who remained met their end in 1943, with deportation to Auschwitz. As Mazower reports in his brief account, the Nazis (who had conquered Greece in 1941) succeeded in murdering over 90 percent of the 50,000 Jews living in Salonica on the eve of World War II.

City of Ghosts is a clearly written and engaging book, even picturesque at points. Had it ended with the Greek conquest of Salonica in 1912, it would rank as a solid contribution to the field. Mazower is convincing in his portrayal of Ottoman society as neither an unrelenting hell for non-Muslims nor a happy, American-style melting pot. Where he fails is in tackling the modern era and the issue that makes historians of 20th-century Greece positively skittish: Greek anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.

More than a decade ago, in *Inside Hitler's Greece*, Mazower had papered over these matters. He claimed, for instance, that the Nazis, and not Greek Christians, had engaged in the ghoulish enterprise of razing the vast Jewish cemetery of Salonica. He patted Greece on the back for its humanitarianism, writing that "Orthodox Greeks showed a remarkable generosity of spirit toward the Jews which bears comparison with that of any other group in Europe."

In *City of Ghosts*, Mazower concedes that some of these conclusions were perhaps premature. As the records demonstrate, it was indeed Greek Christians who destroyed Salonica's Jewish burial ground; some of them, he notes, also collaborated in the Nazis' program of extermination. But even here, Mazower's keynote remains the same: the heroic role of Salonica's righteous Gentiles in trying to save their doomed Jewish neighbors.

This will not do. As a cursory examination of the testimony of survivors shows, the Christian community of Salonica was shockingly indifferent or even sympathetic to the ghettoization of the city's Jews and even to their deportation. Jewish property was looted on a vast scale. As for the Jewish death rate, it was similar to that of Polish Jewry, whose murder at the hands of the Nazis was also facilitated by the energetic cooperation of locals. As Rabbi Michael Molho, the leading historian of the Holocaust in Greece, wrote over 50 years ago, Salonica did have its righteous Gentiles, but "such examples of self-denial and sacrifice . . . can be counted on one's fingers."

Not only does Mazower downplay anti-Semitism in *City of Ghosts*, he seems impatient with scholars who have focused their attention on the subject. Commenting on the scandal in the mid-1980's over Kurt Waldheim—the former UN Secretary-General who had lied about his World War II record, including his service as a Wehrmacht officer in northern Greece—Mazower complains of the "extent to which the

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Holocaust was dominating thinking about the Second World War." "Sometimes," he writes, "it seemed from the way people talked and wrote as though nothing else of significance had happened in those years."

Setting the record straight about the Holocaust in Salonica is not only a matter of doing justice to the city's important Jewish legacy. It bears directly on present-day issues as well. In Greece, public discussion of the role of Christians in delivering Jews to their deaths at the hands of the Germans remains taboo. Some Holocaust memoirs have been "edited" to remove or tone down passages dealing with collaboration.

At the same time, a vicious anti-Zionism with strong anti-Semitic undertones has become *de rigueur*. Greeks may know little about the Jewish past of Salonica, but they have strongly held beliefs about the Jewish present. According to a poll conducted shortly after 9/11, 42 percent of Greeks believed that Jews in the U.S. were warned in advance of the attack. (A similar poll in Muslim Pakistan yielded a figure of 48 percent.)

Unfortunately, Mazower has skirted these issues, preferring instead to make spurious historical comparisons. Thus, in *City of Ghosts*, he asks if the "function" of the Israeli office handling Palestinian property after 1948 was so different from that of the Greek agency that seized the property of Salonica's Jews after they were deported to their deaths in 1943. Both, after all, "systematized the violence of dispossession and sought to give it a more lasting bureaucratic form." To which one feels obliged to answer: yes, they were different indeed, as wartime dislocation, whether through flight or expulsion, is different from genocide.

So gross an instance of historical obtuseness could be ignored if it were not part of a larger picture, but Mazower has made a habit of reviling Israel. In an extraordinary article in the *Financial Times*, written just months after 9/11, he portrayed Israel as a colonial and imperialist state, comparing its occupation of the West Bank to, among other invidious precedents, Hitler's seizure of Poland. Two years later, Mazower could be found in the pages of the *Times* of London, opining that the main threat to Jews today was not anti-Semitism, Arab or otherwise, but the policies of Ariel Sharon.

Salonica may be a city haunted by ghosts, as Mark Mazower would have it, but the ghost haunting his book is a very old hatred, one that sealed the fate of Salonica's Jews and even today remains unrecognized in far too many quarters.

The Nation's Mayor

The Prince of the City: Giuliani, New York, and the Genius of American Life

by Fred Siegel

Encounter. 320 pp. $26.95

Reviewed by
Daniel Casse

According to the conventional wisdom already circulating about the next presidential campaign, New York City's former Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani is "unelectable." He is, as both critics and fans point out, pro-choice, pro-gay rights, pro-gun control. Add to this his messy public divorce, and his early support of the Democratic incumbent Mario Cuomo over the Republican challenger George Pataki in the 1994 race for the gov-

Daniel Casse, *senior director of the White House Writers Group, writes on Republican politics for* Commentary *and other publications.*

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ernorship of New York State, and one can well imagine the negative ads his opponents in the Republican primaries could produce.

Yet the wisdom of political sages notwithstanding, polls show that Giuliani remains the runaway favorite to lead the Republican party in 2008. According to a recent survey conducted by the Marist Institute, more than 70 percent of GOP voters would like to see him enter the race.

Granted, polling data at this early date are little more than contests of name recognition. But the fact that the "liberal" Giuliani remains popular among the increasingly conservative base of Republican voters is just one of the many paradoxes that surround him. He is, after all, a Republican who won office in a Democratic stronghold; a strong ego who surrounds himself with equally headstrong personalities; a combative, divisive, and confrontational figure who, in the wake of 9/11, became a force for national unification and a voice of tender compassion for the families of victims.

The Prince of the City by Fred Siegel, a longtime student of urban politics and policy, is an effort to explain Giuliani's extraordinary post-9/11 appeal by closely examining what came before it. Indeed, the book devotes fewer than ten pages to the attacks of September 11 and their aftermath. Instead, Siegel burrows deep into the details of Giuliani's tenure as mayor of New York City from 1994 through 2002, providing not only a history of municipal governance but an exposé of the unrelenting ideological war Giuliani brought to City Hall.

Whatever reputation Giuliani might have as a social moderate, Siegel demonstrates, has to be counterbalanced by the fact that no other politician has so aggressively challenged the encrusted, stubborn liberalism that dominated New York politics since the 1930's. "It was," says Siegel "precisely his intransigent hostility to the city's reigning political pieties that made him so effective."

SIEGEL'S BOOK begins with a bracing reminder of what an awful place New York City had become in the 1980's and early 90's. Although residents paid the highest tax rates in the country, the city was on the brink of fiscal ruin. The national economy was humming, but hundreds of thousands of jobs were leaving town. Meanwhile, prison guards were on strike, Rev. Al Sharpton and his allies were injecting racial tension into every civic dispute, and student performance at public schools was among the worst in the country.

At the same time, the city itself was becoming not just "ungovernable," in the phrase of the day, but close to uninhabitable. Aggressive panhandling was rampant on the filthy subways. Budget cuts had reduced the frequency of trash collection. Unsupervised psychiatric patients attacked citizens in even the poshest Manhattan neighborhoods. On every block, cars displayed "NO RADIO" signs, the only apparent defense against urban marauders. In 1990, *Time* ran a cover story on "The Rotting of the Big Apple." The mayoral contest between Giuliani and incumbent mayor David Dinkins in 1993 was, writes Siegel, "a referendum on urban decline."

When he won office, Giuliani's response to these pathologies amounted to a rethinking of every operating assumption in New York City politics since the time of Fiorello LaGuardia. For decades, the city's ruling elites had firmly believed that its unique qualities exempted it from the normal strictures of municipal governance. To every problem, the answer was more funding—from taxes, from Albany, or from Washington. Only days after Giuliani's election, Siegel informs us, Mark Green, an erstwhile mayoral candidate and activist gadfly, perfectly expressed this entrenched attitude: if the federal government, Green declared, could invest "billions of dollars in the 90's in a Gulf war [called Desert Storm], isn't it time now we invest in an Operation Domestic Storm here at home?"

GIULIANI ASKED a different question. In his first year in office, he challenged the entire belief system of City Hall by reducing taxes, insisting that city projects be bid out to the private sector, advocating the fingerprinting of welfare recipients in order to prevent fraud, selling off city-owned assets, and proposing the elimination of 2,500 positions at the Board of Education. In doing so, Siegel remarks, Giuliani "offended virtually every interest group in town."

More interesting still was the new mayor's philosophy. Months before his election, Giuliani had delivered what was billed as his "quality of life" speech. The greatest threat to any city, he argued, was the sort of social and political breakdown that made civic life impossible. "What unnerves most city dwellers is not crime per se," Giuliani explained, "but rather the sense of menace and disorder which pervades day-to-day life."

Nowhere was this "quality of life" approach to city government better exhibited than in Giuliani's attitude toward crime and policing. A diligent student of the "broken windows" theory first popularized in the early 1980's by George Kelling and James Q. Wilson, Giuliani took its major lessons to heart. Reducing small nuisances and signs of disorder—graffiti, broken windows, panhandling, and so on—could have a much greater impact on the life of the city than focusing on emergency calls to 911.

Giuliani benefited from seeing how the broken-windows theory worked in practice. William S. Bratton, who had been named head of New York's transit police in 1990, had begun cracking down on the "fare-beaters" who jumped over

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subway turnstiles—a routine misdemeanor that had been committed with impunity for years. What Bratton discovered was that one out of seven arrested fare-beaters either possessed a weapon or was the subject of a felony warrant. In other words, there was a link between fare-beating and more serious crime.

One of Giuliani's first acts in office was to hire Bratton as his police commissioner. Together, they began to transform New York policing. In defiance of sociological orthodoxy, the mayor insisted on more cops on the beat, and more arrests for every category of crime—from irritating squeegee men to street drug dealers to murderers. The result was the most dramatic reduction in crime in the city's history.

Far less celebrated was Giuliani's focus on the threat of international terrorism. He treated the 1993 bombing in the parking garages of the World Trade Center not as an isolated event but as a harbinger of the future. In the face of much public derision, he built an elaborate emergency-response center, including a high-tech command post in Lower Manhattan. He also made exhaustive New Year's eve preparations for the turn of the millennium, when mayhem was widely predicted, going so far as to pre-position the National Guard in Brooklyn should it become necessary to evacuate Manhattan. His psychological and practical readiness for the aftermath of 9/11, Siegel persuasively argues, was no accident.

Today, when many of Giuliani's ideas have become commonplace, it is difficult to appreciate how revolutionary they were a scant ten years ago. Reading Siegel's account of the reaction they elicited from New York's liberal establishment is a useful reminder. "Frightening . . . radical . . . scary stuff," declared Norman Siegel of the American Civil Liberties Union after listening to a Giuliani speech. A member of the city council's minority caucus spoke of a "leaner but meaner city," while Jesse Jackson suggested there were racial motives behind Giuliani's policies, and compared the mayor with segregationist governor George Wallace of Alabama. One newspaper columnist likened the fortified command center to one of Saddam Hussein's bunkers.

It may be tempting to conclude that, like Machiavelli's prince, from whom the title of this book derives, Giuliani was the beneficiary of good fortune. After all, he led New York at a time when liberalism everywhere was in retreat, and when a booming Wall Street economy was reviving the city's financial strength. While not discounting these factors, Siegel stresses that Giuliani took on not the easiest but the most intricate and calcified elements of city government, and always in the face of hard resistance. He succeeded by personal boldness and by an indifference to accepted wisdom—qualities Machiavelli also admired.

Thus, *The Prince of the City* gives a step-by-step account of how Giuliani mastered the city budget, wresting it from the hands of careerists determined to keep union payrolls as expansive as possible. Siegel's chapters on policing, education, welfare reform, and racial politics are rich tutorials on how, thanks in large part to Giuliani, our thinking about these issues has changed over the past decades—and not just in New York City alone. In telling this important story, Fred Siegel is a compelling urban historian.

But, to return to the issue with which we began, what of the future? Although Siegel cites Giuliani's powerful speech on terrorism at the 2004 Republican convention, he cannot convincingly explain how the instincts and guts displayed by New York's mayor make him a viable candidate in the maelstrom of Republican primary politics.

To be sure, Giuliani's pivotal and perhaps indispensable role in the undoing of New York's social-welfare liberalism stands as an unrivaled achievement. Combining this with his post-9/11 stance on global terrorism, one could contend that he has staked out a new basis for conservative politics—one that stands apart from debates about judges, abortion, or gay marriage. One could even show, as Siegel has done, how this potent brand of politics worked—against all odds—in New York. But it remains a tantalizing question whether, having succeeded on Broadway, it can play to the rest of the country.

Kith, Kin & Kids

Marriage, a History: From Obedience to Intimacy, or How Love Conquered Marriage

by Stephanie Coontz

Viking. 448 pp. $25.95

Reviewed by
Kay S. Hymowitz

On the domestic front of the culture wars, Stephanie Coontz has been among the most stalwart of marriage "progressives." A historian whose name can be found in the Rolodex of countless reporters, she is the founder of the Council on Contemporary Families, which describes itself as a "humane and sensitive" alternative to family-values traditionalism. For years Coontz has argued: (1) that the traditional nuclear family is often an oppressive arrangement, especially for women; (2) that the decline of such families, along with the increasing acceptance of divorce, out-of-wedlock child-rearing, cohabita-

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tion, and gay unions, has been a liberating force and deserves public support; and (3) that traditionalists who fight these trends are suffering from an illusion, since the family model they prize was a short-lived artifact of the 1950's. Her point of view is neatly summarized by the titles of her best-known books: *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (1992) and *The Way We Really Are: Coming to Terms with America's Changing Families* (1997).

But now Coontz seems to have had second thoughts about the way we really were. In her new book, *Marriage, a History*, she acknowledges that marriage has not always been in such flux. Indeed, she observes, it has "changed more in the past 30 years than . . . in the previous 3,000"—a dramatic concession, considering her record. "This is not," she notes with admirable candor, "the book I thought I was going to write."

COONTZ BEGINS by examining the distant, prehistoric origins of marriage. She dismisses both feminist theorizing on the subject—that marriage developed as a way to control women—and sociobiological speculation—that marriage was a necessary means for protecting vulnerable women and infants. Marriage evolved, she concludes, as a way to make a village.

There may be other ways, Coontz writes, "to impose an incest taboo, organize child-rearing, pool resources, care for elders, coordinate household production, or pass on property to the next generation." But marriage is "the only way to get in-laws"— that is, "to create new ties of kinship." Securing shelter, raising crops, making clothes, and defending against natural and human enemies were demanding tasks for which in-laws and children provided necessary additional labor.

Among the landed set, Coontz argues, marriage was also a way to expand property and power. Wealthy landowners bartered their eligible sons and daughters to similarly well-situated families, and these Machiavellian mergers fueled the growth of powerful polities. But they also fueled marriage-related violence, as epitomized by the Trojan war. That is why, in an effort to restrain these aristocratic kin groups, the ancient Athenians introduced law into the picture, providing a public sanction for marriage. The focus of the institution then moved, perhaps for the first time, away from the extended family and onto the nuclear couple.

Still, according to Coontz, it took many centuries of miserable brides and grooms before marriage was transformed from the practical merger of old into today's twosome of soulmates—and even then the shift has been limited to the Western world. The groundwork for this slow revolution was laid, in the first place, by the Catholic Church, whose "doctrine of consent" helped to introduce the ideal of a voluntary union. Though families long continued to see children's consent as expendable, by the 15th century the Church had effectively formalized consensual, monogamous marriage.

Also helping to assemble the infrastructure for modern marriage was the custom in Northern Europe (and eventually in America) of self-sufficiency for newlyweds. Elsewhere, including Southern and Eastern Europe, couples remained under the patriarchal thumb and became absorbed into the extended family. But in the West they were expected to farm their own land or take up a trade. This occasioned the need for a solid nest egg, which in turn meant that men and women married later; older wives meant fewer children, as well as the possibility of more equal relationships than those between older grooms and teenaged brides common elsewhere. Similarly promoting equality between the sexes was the rise of an urban merchant and manufacturing class, with couples laboring together in small family businesses.

THIS, AS Coontz sees it, was a system that provided fertile ground for the ideals of the Enlightenment and the political and social revolutions that followed it. Questioning traditional modes of authority, celebrating reason and justice in human relations, thinkers like Mary Wollstonecraft sought to define marriage once and for all as a private contract between two perfectly equal parties. At the same time, romantic love became an implicit part of the pursuit of happiness.

To be sure, social conservatives fretted that the new regime of love, with its celebration of individual passion and choice, contained the seeds of its own destruction. And in fact there were early signs that Cupid would be an undependable guard of the matrimonial bed. By the 18th century, Coontz shows, divorce laws had eased in Europe, Canada, and most especially the United States, which by 1900 was the world capital of divorce. Despite efforts to control the passions unleashed by the regime of love— including an "unprecedented emphasis on female purity and chastity" in Victorian Europe and America—the genie of self-fulfillment was out of the bottle.

By the turn of the 20th century, Freud and Havelock Ellis had introduced Western elites to sexual relativism, while the expanding marketplace gave the masses dance halls, luscious film icons like Clara Bow, and mail-order birth-control devices. Although the 1950's would bring a "golden age of marriage in the West," when 95 percent of adults across all economic and ethnic groups married and divorce was rare, this brief flourishing was, Coontz suggests, only a form of solace for people who had suffered through the terrifying dislocations of the Depression and World War II. A decade later, the ideals of sexual and personal fulfillment that had boiled up earlier in the century would find expression in *Playboy*, *The Feminine Mystique*, and Wood-

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stock. The eventual results—a huge jump in divorce, single motherhood, and cohabitation—were both "inevitable" and "unprecedented."

As Coontz sees it, these latter changes are, for "better or worse," here to stay. Even if divorce laws were tightened, as some have urged, it "would have little effect" and might even discourage people from getting married in the first place or lead to an increase in domestic violence. Unwed parenting must also be accepted as a fact of life, while resisting gay marriage is like "trying to lock the barn door after the horses have already gone." For Coontz, however, there is more silver lining than cloud in our present situation. Our families may be "messy" compared to arrangements of the past, but the fact that men and women can now "customize their life course" makes it more likely that they will enjoy happy, equitable relationships.

Tracing the story of marriage from proto-human primates to modern-day bobos would be a tall order even for a gifted writer, which Coontz, regrettably, is not. The interesting narrative at the center of her book disappears too often in a thicket of marginal detail, such as the marital history of the Germanic warlord Clovis and his son Clothar. Still, Coontz's theme—the emergence of individual self-expression as the basis for marriage—is a profound one.

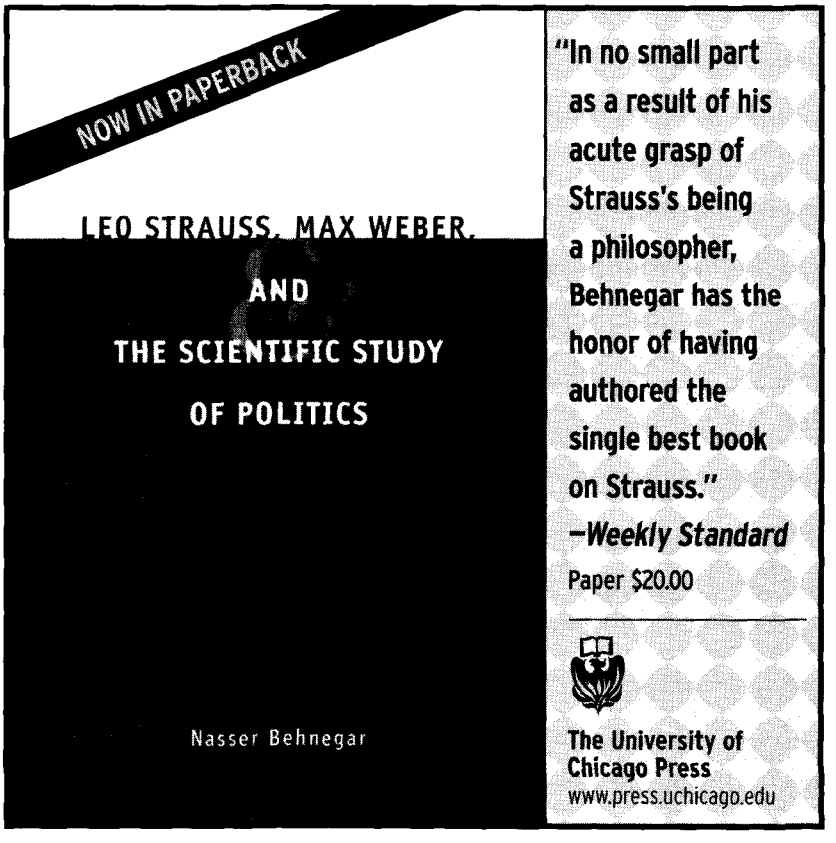
She is hardly the first to notice this theme; in recent years, Barbara Dafoe Whitehead and James Q. Wilson, among others, have also written books about it. But her focus on political and economic development adds an important dimension, and it goes some way toward breathing life into the cliché that marriage is society's bedrock institution.

Unfortunately, Coontz is unable to grasp the full truth of this reality. Like most other self-styled progressives, she does not see the social momentousness of the male-female bond. She underplays the ancient theme of marital love, evident in, among other places, the Hebrew Bible and the *Odyssey*. For much of early human history, Coontz argues, marriage had little to do with romantic love—something scholars have known for a long time—and she goes so far as to suggest that marriage was never primarily about the procreating couple. This vaults right over the obvious: the utter physical dependence of the human infant, perhaps the central problem faced by every society that has looked forward to a future.

If the major purpose of marriage were the creation of kinship groups, as Coontz posits, the institution would have expired in the West by the 17th century, when states and markets took over many of the tasks long provided by clans and extended families. Instead, people continued to marry. Though a decreasing number of them set up shop with their in-laws, the vast majority produced children. The common thread in the history of marriage is thus not the creation of kinship but the care of the young.

To avoid this conclusion, Coontz dabbles in half-truths and omissions. She dismisses, either without comment or as examples of misogyny, the numerous cultures in which female childlessness has been grounds for abandonment. She makes frequent detours into the issue of women in the labor market—her pet concern—but ignores the demands of child-rearing in complex societies, a problem closely related to the emergence of the love-based nuclear family.

In other cases, she just slips inconvenient facts into the shredder. Thus, she cites the Nuer, a West African tribe known for its practice of "woman marriage," as an example of the institution's supposedly chameleon-like nature. Yet, like the many advocates of gay marriage who have also recently discovered the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Nuer, she neglects to mention that the institution depended (in the words of E. Evans-Pritchard, the scholar from whose work Coontz cherry-picks) on barren women being cast in the role of female "husband." In Coontz's hands, an archaic culture's attempt to assimilate what it viewed as a social outlier—the childless woman—becomes an instance of enlightened gender-bending.

It is this obtuseness about the core of marriage that allows Coontz to conclude that its loss of stature is a good thing. What she means, of course, is that it is a good thing for adults, especially women, giving them more independence, more relief from abusive relationships, and more of life's second acts. Even on its own terms this is a highly debatable point; once you take children into account, as Coontz and her allies so rarely seem to do, it is simply wrong.

In the United States, single parenthood is closely correlated with childhood poverty and inequality. Coontz herself notes that lower-income women are more likely to be single mothers, whether through divorce or out-of-wedlock childbearing, while higher-earning women are more likely to marry, have children, and stay married. She admits that the married-parent family "provides an optimal environment for children," but only after devoting pages to arguing that nothing should be done to revive the ailing institution.

As Coontz instructs us in her less ideological moments, marriage emerged as a vital social institution even when it was just a gleam in the Mesopotamian eye. It was necessary not for individual happiness—or, as of the 18th century, not *only* for individual happiness—but for the future of society as a whole. This conclusion may not satisfy her or others on the cultural Left, but it acknowledges the way things *really* are.

Media Matters

South Park Conservatives: The Revolt Against Liberal Media Bias

by Brian C. Anderson

Regnery. 191 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
Jonathan Kay

AMERICAN CONSERVATIVES have been decrying the left-wing bias of the media for so long that they have come to take its existence for granted. But does the assumption still hold? In recent years, the Right's media clout has risen markedly. Fox News dominates the all-news cable market. Conservative talk-show hosts rule AM radio. And on the Internet, an army of right-of-center bloggers stands on guard to debunk the latest spin dished out by the much-derided MSM ("mainstream media").

One of the first writers to document this trend was Brian C. Anderson, the senior editor of *City Journal*. Two years ago, he produced a widely cited article arguing that "the Left's near monopoly over the institutions of opinion and information . . . is skidding to a startlingly swift halt." In *South Park Conservatives: The Revolt Against Media Bias*, Anderson expands his thesis to book length, systematically analyzing the technological, demographic, and legal changes that have helped the Right to even the media playing field over the last two decades.

THE REVOLT against media bias began, Anderson writes, on America's AM airwaves. Until the 1980's, political talk radio was largely moribund thanks to the "fairness doctrine," a federal policy that required broadcasters to give equal time to both sides of an issue. In theory, the rule meant that if a radio host promoted, say, gun control, his station was required to provide time for the NRA to deliver a rebuttal. In practice, most station owners simply avoided political talk entirely.

In 1987, Dennis Patrick, the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, repealed the doctrine, paving the way for a boom in political programming. Because National Public Radio already had a coast-to-coast network serving urban, left-leaning listeners, almost all of the new voices skewed rightward. Many of them—Bill O'Reilly, Sean Hannity, Michael Savage, Laura Schlessinger—have since become household names. But the figure who towers above them all, who effectively invented political talk radio, is Rush Limbaugh.

When Limbaugh began broadcasting nationally in 1988, people still thought of political talk as a stuffy business conducted by beltway insiders and bow-tied pundits, the sort of thing one endured before football on Sundays. But Limbaugh was an entertainer. "Greetings, conservatives across the fruited plain," went his introductory riff:

> This is Rush Limbaugh, the most dangerous man in America, with the largest hypothalamus in North America, serving humanity simply by opening my mouth, destined for my own wing in the Museum of Broadcasting, executing everything I do flawlessly with zero mistakes, doing this show with half my brain tied behind my back just to make it fair because I have a talent on loan from . . . God. Rush Limbaugh. A man. A legend. A way of life.

Behind the self-parodying shtick was a serious political agenda, and Limbaugh prosecuted it ruthlessly. Among the accomplishments Anderson ascribes in whole or in part to the broadcaster are the defeat of the Clinton health plan, the Republican "revolution" of 1994 (in which the party took control of the House of Representatives), and

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George W. Bush's victory over John McCain in the 2000 GOP presidential primary. With an audience that has now grown to 20-million listeners, Limbaugh has demonstrated that the *New York Times* and other elite organs are not the only media voices heard in Washington.

The creation of Fox News in 1996 marked another milestone. Notwithstanding its reputation, Anderson writes, the network did not set out to deliver the news with a right-wing spin. But its news editors do make a conscious effort to avoid any condescension to conservatives, and to avoid the trite set pieces the industry often uses to frame major issues. Whereas the older networks might begin a story about an impending prisoner execution with a shot of protesters holding a candlelight vigil, for instance, Fox makes a point of leading with a description of the underlying crime. Whatever the final truth of its "fair and balanced" motto, the network struck a chord. By 2003, Fox had more prime-time cable viewers than CNN and MSNBC combined.

In more recent years, yet another medium has permitted conservatives to do an end-run around the major newspapers and networks: the web log or "blog." Through their ability to link to one another, to update content in real time, and to tap into legions of like-minded fact-checkers and experts, bloggers on the Right have scored a number of victories. Dan Rather, for instance, might still be the host of the CBS Evening News had his phony documents about Bush's military service not been debunked by bloggers armed with knowledge of 1970's-era typewriters.

As Anderson sees it, the Right has been energized not only by new media but by demographic changes as well. The opinion-makers of Dan Rather's generation were products of the Vietnam war, the civil-rights struggle, and the feminist movement. Today's university students witnessed none of this. The America they know is generally a decent, tolerant place, dominated less by bigoted Archie Bunkers than by politically correct Meatheads. For those rebelling against society's dogmas, the most popular current targets are not the military-industrial complex or the "patriarchy," but affirmative action, militant secularism, multiculturalism, and abortion on demand.

In Anderson's view, nothing exemplifies this shift better than the cartoon show that gives his book its title. *South Park*, now in its eighth season on the cable channel Comedy Central, is something of an acquired taste; its plot twists are grotesque, and foul language spews forth from its button-cute protagonists. But laced among the obscenities is some surprisingly sophisticated political satire. And unlike typical Hollywood fare, *South Park* picks its targets on an equal-opportunity basis, skewering figures on the Left and Right alike.

In one episode described by Anderson, the mother of an eight-year-old visits a clinic in order to "abort" him. When the receptionist turns her down—"This is what we would refer to as the 'fortieth trimester.' . . . We prefer to abort babies a little earlier on"—she responds angrily: "Well, I think you need to keep your laws off my body." In another episode produced shortly after the 2000 Florida election controversy, a crudely animated Rosie O'Donnell visits South Park to resolve a student-election dispute involving her nephew. Her manner grates on the locals, and a schoolteacher gives her a taste of red-state resentment. "People like you preach tolerance and open-mindedness all the time, but when it comes to Middle America, you think we're all evil and stupid country yokels who need your political enlightenment," he tells her. "Just because you're on TV doesn't mean you know crap about the government."

These are not accidental broadsides. They emerge straight from the worldview of the show's thirty-something creators. As one of them, Trey Parker, puts it, employing the show's trademark profanity: "Entertainment industry [figures] are by and large whore-chasing, drug-addict f—k-ups. But they still believe they're better than the guy in Wyoming who really loves his wife and takes care of his kids."

South Park Conservatives has been launched into a crowded market. As Anderson himself points out, one of the products of "the revolt against liberal media bias" has been a bumper crop of conservative books. But Anderson distinguishes himself by resisting the overheated partisan rhetoric animating many of these new titles. Though his account occasionally carries a triumphalist tone that betrays his political sympathies, his analysis generally remains sober and well grounded in fact.

And there is, indeed, much to celebrate in the new ideological diversity described by Anderson. As with all market liberalizations, the winners have been both consumers, who now have more variety and choice, and entrepreneurs, who have satisfied previously unmet demand. More important, America's conservative media have transformed the country's political discourse, giving a voice to segments of popular opinion that previously had few forums.

Where Anderson falls short is in establishing the extent of liberal bias in the media. Yes, as he shows, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, CBS News, and CNN have all been caught twisting the facts and marginalizing right-wing ideas. But if one looks beyond these powerhouse outlets to the nation's middle-sized newspapers and local television stations—which collectively reach a far larger audience—bias is less evident. Consider that in 2000, George W. Bush won far more newspaper editorial endorsements than Al Gore. Four years later, John

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Kerry came out ahead among the papers, but only by a tiny margin.

In recent years, moreover, even the big media outlets have been forced to acknowledge the political slant in their coverage and, however reluctantly, to begin addressing it. Whatever else one might say about CBS, its executives did in the end unburden themselves of Dan Rather. The *New York Times*, meanwhile, has appointed a public editor who airs accusations of bias in the newspaper's own pages, and a "credibility group" established by the *Times* itself recently issued a strong critique of the paper's liberal bent, accusing it of stigmatizing religious Christians, championing the cause of gay marriage in purportedly objective news stories, and ignoring America's rural areas.

These moves may strike longtime critics as mere public relations, or as tokenism fueled by falling circulation and viewership figures. Be that as it may, they leave little doubt that the *Times* and other left-leaning media do finally understand how they are perceived, and even why they are perceived that way.

The result, ironically, is that a spirit of self-examination may now be more alive on the left side of the media spectrum than on the right. Anderson, for example, apparently subscribes to the belief that polarization is here to stay, and that conservative outlets must continue to function as a counterweight to society's traditionally dominant left-wing culture. About all this he may be correct, but some conservative news media have not been as careful as they might be to avoid the bad habits they have long criticized in their ideological opposites.

Which is not to say that conservatives in general are not fully justified in savoring their achievements in the media culture wars. About those achievements, Brian Anderson has written the best account to date.

We mourn the death of

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Putin's Russia—Stalin Lite

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World democratic opinion has yet to realize the alarming implications of President Vladimir Putin's State of the Union speech on April 25, 2005, in which he said that the collapse of the Soviet Union represented the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century." What this former KGB officer is saying is that it would have been better for the world if a totalitarian dictatorship, one that in the seven decades of its existence was responsible for the deaths of tens of millions of Russians and other peoples or their imprisonment in a Gulag slave labor system, were still to exist. Just imagine if German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder were to announce that the fall of the Third Reich was the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century."

The more I see and read about Mr. Putin, in power since 1999, and his "managed democracy," the more apprehensive I become about the future of Russia and the safety of its neighbors. If Putin believes that the dissolution of the Soviet Union into fifteen independent states represents the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century," then it follows that Putin might well believe he should do something to repair the loss occasioned by his predecessors Boris Yeltsin and Mikhail Gorbachev. Millions of onetime Soviet citizens, including the beleaguered Chechen people, believe that they are better off today because of the "greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century." But to Putin the end of the Soviet Union did not mean freedom for millions of Soviet-yoked people—for him it meant, and still means, catastrophe.

The thousand-year history of Russia has an underlying consistency. Although it has never been able to produce a genuine democracy, it has successfully produced imperialist tyrannies, czarist and Bolshevik. The very first czar, Ivan IV (1533–1584), crushed the power of rival dukes and boyars and became an emperor. During his reign, he tried to strengthen the state and the military, but his methods and acts were so horribly cruel that he was later called Ivan the Terrible.

It is time to put aside fanciful hopes about Putin as Russia's democrat-in-chief. The best single-phrase description of Putin is "Stalin lite." Thus it was understandable that Putin would celebrate the ninetieth birthday of Yuri V. Andropov, the merciless head of the KGB. The Andropov celebration last year did not create much notice. Yet there would have been hell to pay, even a half-century later, had the German government in 2000 celebrated the birth centenary of Heinrich Himmler, the remorseless head of the Nazi secret police, the Gestapo, and the SS and one of the architects of the Holocaust.

Putin endangers world peace: He has said he is ready to supply weapons to outlaw regimes. He has said he would provide short-range missiles to Syria and nuclear components to Iran. To fulfill such intentions would mean perhaps an even greater geopolitical catastrophe.

—Arnold Beichman

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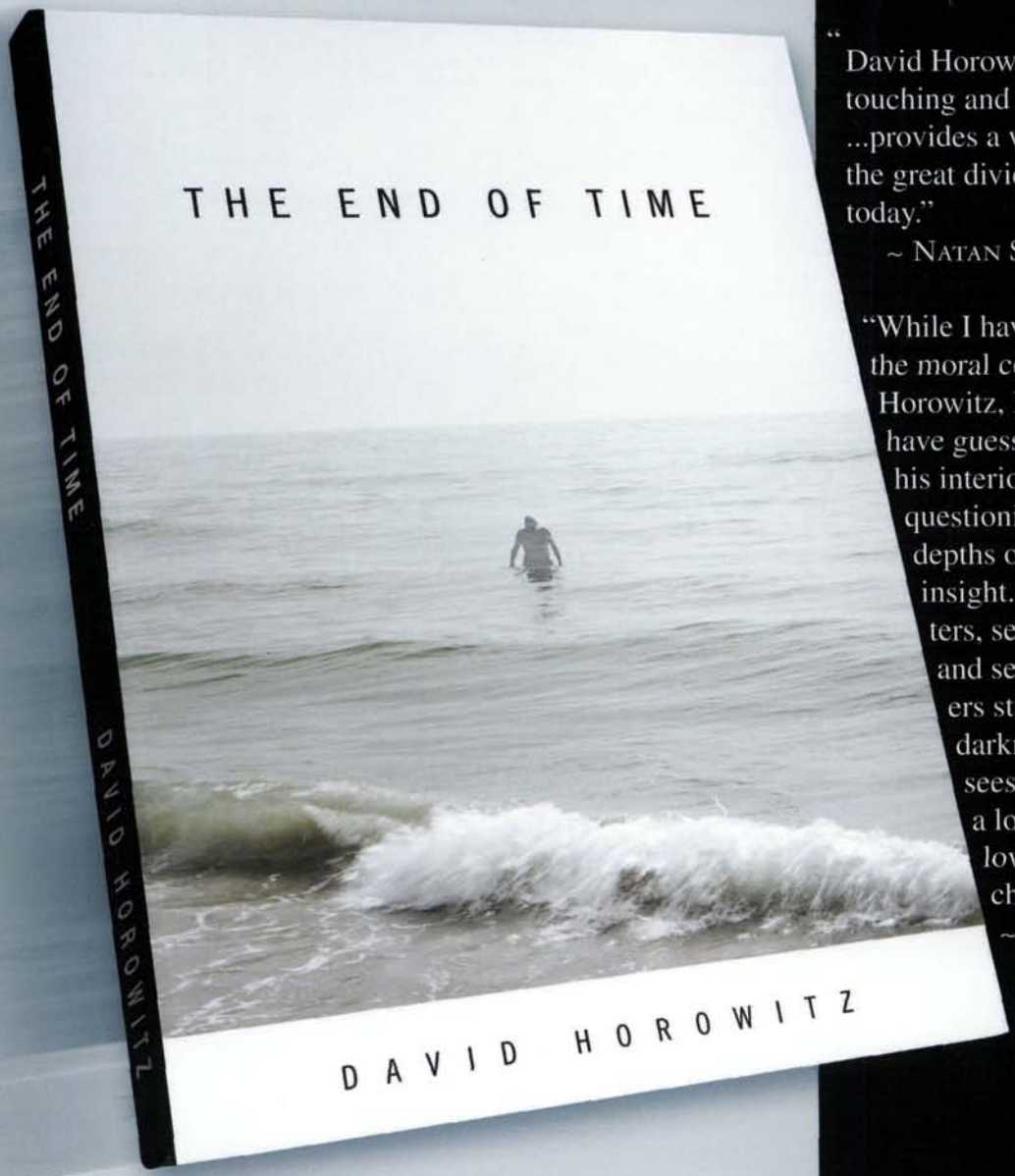

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